High court junks new voters' registration

STORY ON PAGE A2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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PAF plane crashes; woman pilot killed

MABALACAT, Pampanga—A Philippine Air Force plane crashed and exploded in a residential subdivision here yesterday, killing one of its two pilots, reports said.

The PAF OV-10, a two-seat reconnaissance plane, crashed amid heavy rains in a vacant lot in Fil-Homes subdivision in Barangay Mabiga here shortly before 4 p.m., Col. Charles Hotchkiss, deputy wing commander of the PAF's

PAF/ A13

Irene camp accuses Jacobi of frame-up

Araneta lawyer threatens to sue parties concerned

BY BLANCHE RIVERA, DONNA CUETO AND ROCKY NAZARENO

A FULL two weeks after the INQUIRER first reported an alleged attempt by Irene Marcos and Gregorio "Greggy" Araneta to launder Swiss funds through a German bank, their lawyer finally threatened, on their behalf, to sue Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi.

But he did not deny that Irene had opened an account at Deutsche Bank in Dusseldorf, where German authorities are now investigating the Marcos heiress for "money laundering."

Lawyer Eleazar Reyes, whom Jacobi had also implicated in the alleged attempt to secretly transfer "ill-gotten" wealth, also produced affidavits of American businessmen Henry Horace Hutcherson III and Curtiss Waters saying that they and the Aranetas had been "set up."

"My clients and I shall soon file . . . the appropriate cases in Philippine courts to make the unscrupulous parties accountable for their criminal and prejudicial acts," Reyes said in a letter sent to Malacañang, the Senate blue ribbon committee and the Presidential Commission on Good Government on March 22.

"Hank" Hutcherson and Waters branded Jacobi's claims part of a "big hoax" meant to lure investors into funding a supposed project to recover the Marcoses' bank assets and gold, which the Australian investigator claims is worth tens of billions of dollars.

But Walter Schumacher, press spokesperson for the Deutsche Bank headquarters in Frankfurt, yesterday said the bank had informed German authorities about the Aranetas' desire to

IRENE/ A14

"THIS is quite pretty," Julia Roberts says of her Oscar for best actress but not quite as pretty as the pretty woman herself. REUTERS

PAOCTF men fired; another anti-kidnap force formed

BY DAVE VERIDIANO

MOST of the 800 members of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) were fired yesterday while the police, military and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) were forming another task force to fight kidnappers, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

The walking papers were handed to the task force members by their immediate superiors, who were personally informed of their own dismissal by the new PAOCTF chief, Director Hermogenes Ebdane.

Those fired were perceived as very loyal to former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson, now a senatorial candidate of the opposition.

The chiefs of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the NBI met in Camp Crame and agreed to forge a joint memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the creation of an inter-agency body against kidnap-for-ransom syndicates.

Director General Leandro Mendoza of the PNP, Diomedio Villanueva of the AFP, Director Reynaldo Wycoco of the NBI finalized the agreement, which al-

PAOCTF/ A14

4 new National Artists named

Writer Jose, painter Kiukok, director Bernal, dramatist Montano

BY LITO B. ZULUETA

AS ARTISTS lock horns with Malacañang and the Church over freedom of expression, a novelist, an expressionist painter, a dramatist and a filmmaker have been named the country's newest National Artists.

A joint meeting by the boards of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCAA) last week approved the proclamation of fictionist F. Sionil Jose, visual artist Ang Kiukok, the late theater artist Severino Montano and the late director Ishmael Bernal as National Artists.

The appointments will go to Malacañang for approval, but NCCA officials say the matter is merely a formality.

The approval of the latest batch of National Artists came as the arts and culture community is protesting Malacañang's recall of "Live Show," a controversial movie about live-sex performers that had been called pornographic by conservative church groups led by the influential Roman Catholic archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin.

As a result of the recall, Nicanor Tiongson, a respected literary historian and film critic, resigned as chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

"I don't want to be an instrument in the repression of freedom of expression which is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution," Tiongson

4 NEW/ A14

'BUNCH OF MISFITS'

Crowe wobbles, Roberts swoons on Oscar night

LOS ANGELES—Best actor Russell Crowe was so stunned his legs wobbled and best actress Julia Roberts was so excited she forgot to thank the woman whose life was the basis of her career-defining role in the movie "Erin Brockovich."

In one of the tightest Oscar races in years, the Roman Empire epic "Gladiator" bested its closest competitors as best picture, winning a total of five Oscars, including best actor for Crowe, costume design, visual effects and sound.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," the first Asian film ever nominated for best picture, won the best foreign language film. The martial arts fantasy grabbed three other Academy Awards including art direction, score and cinematography.

Steven Soderbergh won best director for the anti-drug drama "Traffic," one of two films he was nominated for this year, the other being "Brockovich."

It was a sweet reversal of Oscar fortunes for Crowe a year after losing a first-time Oscar bid for his powerful performance as a tobacco industry whistleblower in "The Insider."

A look of disbelief spread across the face of the New Zealand-born, Australian-raised actor when his name was announced from the stage of the Shrine Auditorium at the 73rd Academy Awards.

"I didn't have any legs," he later told reporters backstage. "I was stunned."

He admitted he didn't expect to win and originally thought Michael Douglas, who was not nominated, should have taken the Oscar for his role in "Traffic."

Crowe, who played a general turned

CROWE/ A13

Optional sex for priests proposed

BY ALEX PAL
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—With his active role in the two Edsa revolutions, Msgr. Nico Bautista has established his credentials as a fighter for reforms in government. Now he is advocating for reforms within his own backyard, the Roman Catholic Church.

"Optional celibacy," is one such reform that he has in mind.

"I think the Church should do an honest review of the rules (governing priesthood)

OPTIONAL/ A14

Perez tells Manero: No deal

BY ROCKY NAZARENO AND AQUILES Z. ZONIO
PDI Mindanao Bureau

NO DEAL.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday flatly rejected four conditions for surrender set by escaped priest killer Norberto Manero Jr., saying that the "government cannot agree to the demands of an escaped convict."

"We are not going to recommend that any of his demands be considered," Perez said during a press conference.

"Instead," he added, "we shall ask, as we have already asked, police agencies to intensify the search" for Manero.

The murderer of Italian missionary Tullio Favali wants, among other concessions, the government to set aside former President Joseph Estrada's decision to revoke his pardon.

In a handwritten letter sent Sunday to his lawyer Tomas Falgui III, Manero, alias Commander Bucay, said "injustice" had prompted him to escape from the provincial jail in Sarangani on March 22.

"For info I escaped because of the injustice to us (sic)," Manero wrote.

Falgui said he received the note late Sunday afternoon. An unidentified person delivered it to the home of Falgui's father in General Santos City, the lawyer said.

PEREZ/ A4

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

'LIVE SHOW' SIZZLES. Movie directors, producers, actors including the lead star of the banned film, "Live Show," Klaudia Koronel, hold a protest rally in Mendiola. *(Story on Page A18.)*

Gov't, MILF leaders sign accord in secret meeting

MORO guerrillas yesterday said they had signed an accord with Filipino officials in a secret meeting in Malaysia that could renew talks to end decades of fighting in Mindanao.

The agreement, signed in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, addressed conditions set by the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for renewed peace negotiations, MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said.

"Definitely there is already an agreement addressing the major concerns or preconditions presented by the MILF for the holding of the talks," Kabalu told the Associated Press in a telephone interview. "This will now go on. We're happy about this. Who doesn't want peace?"

Kabalu refused to give details of the agreement, which he said would be announced by both sides later this week.

Officials were not immediately available for comment.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who took office on Jan. 20, has declared a unilateral

GOV'T/ A14

Second FRONT PAGE

China-Taiwan tension raises anxiety in RP

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs is worried the growing tension between China and Taiwan over the latter's purchase of military equipment from the United States could create a "dangerous flashpoint" for the Philippines.

Foreign Undersecretary Lauro L. Baja Jr. said there is growing concern "the purchase of military equipment from the US by Taiwan might lead to war with China."

He said that in such a David and Goliath match-up, Taiwan would seek the help of its biggest ally—the US.

And the Philippines might just find itself in the middle of a war it has no interest in fighting should the US invoke its defense treaty with the country.

Baja was quick to underscore, however, that the Philippines would only be placed in such a position "if the Chinese take action that could be taken as a threat to peace."

"It should be a worry if the situation exacerbates, if the positions (of both China and Taiwan) harden," Baja said.

He added that "any US decision would be crucial."

"The Chinese might come out strongly (in reaction to the US arms sale to Taiwan)," he said.

Baja suggested the Philippine government take immediate action to address the imminent threat posed by the growing tension between China and Taiwan.

He said this could be tackled at the regular Wednesday meeting of Cluster E of the Macapagal Cabinet. *Rocky Nazareno*

SC votes down new voters' listup

BY DELMAR CARIÑO
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Supreme Court voted 8-6 yesterday to deny petitions seeking the registration of an estimated 4.5 million first-time voters in the May 14 elections.

The decision effectively killed the hopes of the mostly young voters to participate in the polls, after many of them had their first taste of practicing democracy during the People Power II uprising that ousted discredited President Joseph Estrada.

The high court also ruled that the Commission on Elections did not commit a grave abuse of discretion when it issued Resolution 3854 on Feb. 8 denying requests for a two-day registration of voters last Feb. 17 and 18.

The court's 25-page decision, penned by Associate Justice Arturo Buena, dismissed the petitions filed by party-list group Akbayan and University of the Philippines student Michelle Betito.

The petitioners were expected to file motions for reconsideration in view of the strong dissenting opinion expressed by Associate Justice Bernardo Pardo.

Dissenting opinion

"It is reasonably expected that the Comelec under its new leadership would take appropriate action in order not to deprive those who are qualified to vote (of their right) because of the neglect, inaction or delay in its preparation for the coming elections," said Pardo in his 14-page dissenting opinion.

Majority of the justices, however, agreed that while the right to suffrage was not absolute, the law is very clear that those who want to vote must first register.

"The act of registration is an indispensable precondition to the right of suffrage," the decision said, adding "registration cannot and should not be denigrated to the lowly stature of a mere statutory requirement."

Those who concurred with Buena's decision were Justices Josue Bellosillo, Jose Melo, Santiago Kapunan, Vicente Mendoza, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Sabino de Leon Jr. and Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez.

Those who joined Pardo in dissent were Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Justices Jose Vitug, Artemio Panganiban, Leonardo Quisumbing and Minerva Gonzaga-Reyes. Justice Reynato Puno is on official leave.

Malacañang yesterday said it found it unfortunate that the Supreme Court had ruled against the holding of a special registration, but added the issue augured good things for democracy and justice in the country.

Part of democracy

"This is as much a part of democracy as the new voters' right to vote," Presidential spokesperson Renato Corona said of the ruling.

Although Malacañang respected the ruling, he said it was a "pity because we are disenfranchising four million first-time voters."

He said the Palace had made a strong bid to help the youth cast votes in the May 14 elections, but they will have to abide by what the Supreme Court says on the matter.

He said the youth could still make their presence felt in the elections by campaigning for the candidates they deem fit to serve in government.

It is estimated that 4.5 million Filipinos between 18 and 21 years old failed to register for the 1998 national elections and during the continuing registration that ended Dec. 27 last year.

The high court cited Section 8 of Republic Act 8189, the Election Law, which states that no registration should be held 120 days before a regular election.

It also noted what the Comelec said was the "operational impossibility" of accomplishing the task.

It also dismissed the allegations of the petitioners that the Comelec erred in setting the deadline of the registration on Dec. 27 instead of Jan. 13, which was supposed to be the start of the 120-day election period.

There was no evidence that the petitioners had applied to register, which the Comelec had denied, and neither did they file a complaint before the poll body, the decision said.

No absolute prohibition

The high court noted that even the executive and legislative departments had admitted that there were legal obstacles to the proposed special registration.

This was when President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Proclamation 15 calling Congress to a special session to pass a special registration law.

The court said this act w "an intimation on the part of both the executive and legislative departments that a legal obstacle indeed stands in the way of the conduct of the special registration."

Akbayan and other groups had earlier petitioned the Supreme Court to set aside Resolution 3854 for "being unconstitutional as it effectively causes the disenfranchisement" of those who would not be able to vote on May 14 because they failed to register on time.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said the physical impossibility of conducting the special registration could be "solved with proper planning, coordination and cooperation of its (Comelec) deputized agencies."

Borra insisted the banning of registration 120 days before a regular election was "not an absolute prohibition."

"The Comelec is vested with residual powers to conduct pre-election activities, including the registration of voters, beyond the deadline prescribed by law," argued Borra. "This is so as not to defeat the right of suffrage of the people guaranteed by the Constitution." *With Armand Nocum, Rocky Nazareno, and Jhunnex Napallacan, Chito Fuentes, Roger Paller and Ma. Diosa Labiste, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Oslo to host peace talks

By CARLITO PABLO

PEACE talks with communist rebels will resume next month in a neutral foreign venue, possibly in Oslo, Norway, a government source said yesterday.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the formal talks will be preceded by a "handshake" solidarity conference in Manila on April 18 between government and National Democratic Front panels.

These were confirmed by sources from the Left who said that Luis Jalandoni, the chief NDF negotiator, will be arriving from the Netherlands on the second week of April.

The Norwegian government had offered their capital, Oslo, as a neutral venue "way back in 1996," the source from the communist side said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to announce soon her final decision on the venue of the talks.

The two sides earlier announced that they would hold peace talks on April 27.

The same government source said the release of Army Maj. Noel Buan, who has been a captive of the communist-led New People's Army since July 1999, was not a precondition for the resumption of talks.

Neither has the defense and military establishments posed any objection to the holding of the talks in a neutral foreign venue, a non-negotiable demand of the NDF, he said.

The government source said the acceptance of the rebels' proposal of a foreign venue does not confer a status of belligerency to the NDF, the umbrella organization of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has been waging an insurgency since 1968.

The source explained that while the government would have wanted the talks to be held in the country, Malacañang decided to give priority to jumpstarting the stalled peace process.

"Which is more important? Venue or the peace talks itself? President Macapagal wants peace in our time," the source said.

The solidarity conference between the two sides is being arranged by Church-based groups.

The talks will have a brief recess to give way to the May 14 elections where Left-leaning organizations, particularly the Bayan Muna partylist group, are taking part.

Buan, former intelligence officer of the Southern Luzon Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, is expected to be released anytime soon by the NPA's Melito Glor Command in Southern Tagalog.

The government and the NDF had separately announced a ceasefire in Southern Tagalog provinces in order to facilitate the release of the Army officer.

However, human rights advocates in Quezon yesterday said the suspension of military offensives has not brought peace to the Southern Tagalog region.

"Peace continues to be elusive in the Quezon province because of the continuous terrorism activities disguised as counter-insurgency operations by members of the Armed Forces," Emer Calibo, a staff member of Karapatan-Quezon chapter, said.

Militants yesterday lauded the President's pronouncement that her government would give priority to peace but dared her to put it into "concrete actions."

Dani Beltran, secretary general of the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, that while the President had been pushing for peace by suspending military offensives, the military was violating her order and conducting operations in Quezon province.

He cited cases of harassment, physical assault, illegal search and arbitrary arrests perpetrated by the military in different barangays in Quezon province. *With reports from Andrea T. Echavez, Metro Manila and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Moro rebels attack; 6 slain

COTABATO CITY—Six people were killed in two attacks by suspected Muslim separatists in North Cotabato and Maguindanao over the weekend, the military said yesterday.

A Moro Islamic Liberation Front unit ambushed a patrol by marines near the town of Barira, Maguindanao, on Sunday, leaving two MILF men and a marine dead, said military spokesperson Maj. Julieto Ando.

The marines were part of a military force deployed to secure the sprawling Abubakar training camp which government forces seized from the MILF last year, he added.

On Saturday, suspected MILF gunmen raided a government-run evacuation center for civilians displaced by last year's fighting, Ando said.

The attack left three civilians dead and six others wounded near the town of Kabacan, North Cotabato. The victims included Muslims as well as Christians.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared a unilateral truce in Mindanao and freed a number of alleged MILF members detained for a series of shopping mall blasts last year to entice the rebels to restart peace talks. *AFP*

Convene NSC, Orly asks Gloria

FORMER Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to convene the National Security Council to form a national consensus on the conduct of peace talks with communist and Muslim rebels.

Mercado, a senatorial candidate of the opposition, expressed concern that government negotiators may have already agreed to certain demands of the MILF, particularly that of the return of its captured camps including its main base, Camp Abubakar.

He said such demand was "outrageous, if not totally unacceptable."

"We have to get a consensus of the terms we are willing to give them during the negotiations," Mercado said in a news conference yesterday at Club Filipino.

"Unless we have transparency in the peace talks, we may wake up one day with an agreement that will not be acceptable to the people."

As the defense chief under ousted President Joseph Estrada, Mercado oversaw the conduct of a massive military assault against the MILF, which led to the resurgence of armed conflict in Mindanao.

Mercado, however, evaded the question of whether Estrada should be invited to the NSC meeting.

The country's ex-presidents are members of the NSC. Estrada is still contesting the Supreme Court's March 2 decision that declared Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the country's legitimate president.

"I wouldn't know (if Estrada should be treated as a former or an incumbent president). That is a problem that has to be resolved by the government.

"But I think we can suspend partisan political activities including the issue of (Macapagal's) legitimacy in the interest of coming up with a consensus for national security purposes," Mercado said. *Dona Pazzibugan*

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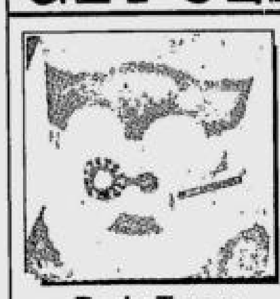
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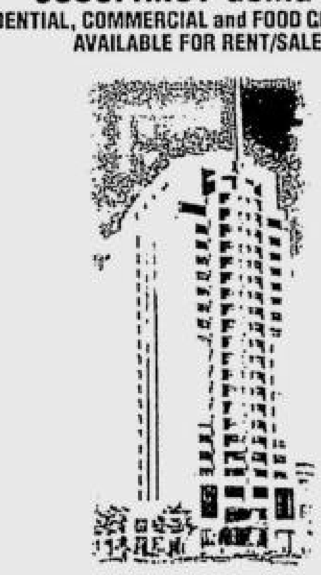
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SPOKESMAN FOR THE PEOPLE

Vendors raise the hands of former Press Secretary Ricardo "Dong" Puno in one of his market sorties in Mindanao last week. Puno, a candidate of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa and also a former presidential spokesperson, says he will be the spokesperson of the ordinary Filipinos in the Senate.

Perez tells Manero: No deal

(From page A1)

The convicted priest killer, who is also charged with kidnapping and killing two brothers in 1977, enumerated his demands in the letter.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said the demands were "crazy and out of this world" and urged the government to lock him up for good.

Falgui conceded that the demand concerning the restoration of Manero's pardon in 1999 was unreasonable, and said he and his client would simply wait for the government to react.

Manero also claimed that no politicians were involved in his escape, contrary to allegations that he had enjoyed strong political and military connections.

Supt. Cesar Daquil, Sarangani police chief, said the police had "compared the signature in the letter with Manero's signature in our file documents" and had confirmed that it was authentic.

Daquil also said he called up Julie Yee, Manero's wife, and that she also confirmed that her husband had written the letter.

Plan to arrest wife

He also said government authorities would arrest Yee as well.

Although there is no arrest order out on Yee, "it is incumbent upon us to arrest her for investigation," Daquil said.

She said over the weekend that was supposed to meet Manero at an undisclosed location in Bukidnon on Sunday, but added that she called off the meeting after learning that the police were after her, too.

"If they are going to arrest me, then they can look for Commander Bucay on their own. I will no longer help. *Bahala na sila*," she said.

Daquil admitted that law enforcement agencies involved in the massive manhunt had no substantial leads as to the exact whereabouts of the fugitive.

In an interview on Sunday, Yee vehemently denied any involvement in Manero's escape. "The jail officials were just (guessing) when they said my husband could have hidden himself in my car's luggage compartment," she said.

Speedy trial

Perez said the only demand that the government might even consider would be Manero's request for a speedy trial of the cases of all inmates at the Saranggani Provincial Jail.

The justice secretary said the prisoners were entitled to a speedy trial independent of whether or not Manero had made such a demand.

The escaped convict has also asked that a scheduled May 7 hearing of the pending double murder case against him be moved to an earlier date. He also wants the provincial government to lift an order suspending the jail warden and three guards who are suspected of having helped him escape.

But Perez said his office was only waiting for the National Bureau of Investigation to submit a report on the March 22 escape before deciding whether or not to prosecute a case against the jail personnel.

"If it is proven (in the report) that there is prima facie evidence against the warden and the guards, then that is the time when we can move," he said.

"If by Wednesday are still no results, I will call (Sarangani government officials and the NBI) to explain what really happened," Perez said.

'Crazy'

"Manero has completely gone crazy in thinking he can even make demands on the government. His demands are out of this world, the government should not even dignify this by responding to his demands," Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, said in an interview.

"I think the government should just pursue him. I'm averse to talking about shoot to kill orders. (But) the government must go after him and put him back where he belongs," he said.

Biazon said that Manero seemed to escape whenever there was a transition in government.

"Are there elements within the government that are simply out to grant Manero some concessions by allowing him to escape? So I think this government must not only put Manero back in jail but must investigate why he continues to be treated with kid gloves," Biazon said.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for his part, said in a press release that Manero's demands were a "mere ploy to confuse government authorities" while he tried to flee the country.

Interior Secretary Joey Lina said Manero was "in no position to demand" anything.

"He's beginning to sound like a politician," Lina joked, referring to the convict's demand for a speedy trial of his fellow inmates. *With reports from Juliet Javellana and Volt Contreras*

Survey: Voters favor bets who favor birth control

BY NORMAN BORDADORA

CANDIDATES promising to support legislation on population control and reproductive health are likely to get the nod of a majority of voters in the May 14 elections, a Pulse Asia survey showed.

The survey, conducted in December 2000, showed that 76 percent of 1,200 respondents nationwide would support candidates who favor the government's family planning program.

This fact seems to have been lost on politicians aspiring for elective office, however, as only half of the respondents admitted to hearing population and reproductive issues being discussed in the election campaigns.

"The candidates are taking the prudent path during the campaign. They do not want to offend the Catholic Church by promoting family planning during their campaign sorties," said Felipe Miranda, Pulse Asia president.

"They would not want to risk whatever gains they already have by promoting something which they think would ruffle anybody's feathers," he said.

Miranda said such fears might be unfounded as the Pulse Asia survey showed that only seven percent of the respondents believe that their religion discourages them from supporting candidates who favor family planning.

The survey was commissioned by the advocacy group, Futures Group International, which lobbies for family planning and reproductive health legislation in both houses of Congress.

Among the major findings, which could be of special interest to candidates running for congressional posts, were:

- Some 80 percent favor candidates who would support a program on women's health.
- Some 76 percent would support candidates in favor of family planning.
- Some 71 percent would support candidates who would push for a law on population issues.
- Some 74 candidates would support candidates in favor of a national budget for family planning.

"The public, which is largely Catholic, showed no resistance that can be attributed to religion. As a matter of fact, many Catholics perceive that there is no Catholic opposition to family planning," Miranda said in a press briefing yesterday.

"Either Catholics are not impressed by the Church's teachings, or the religious may need to educate Catholics more," he said.

The survey showed that 43 percent of the respondents think that their religion is actually agreeable to the government's providing family planning services to women, both married and unmarried. Miranda said that this may not be a majority but it does reflect a high plurality.

Moreover, 38 percent of the respondents think that their religion actually permits the use of contraceptives in some cases while 33 percent think that their religion actually says nothing about contraception.

"What we have here is 7 out of 10 persons in a predominantly Catholic country finding nothing inimical about contraceptive use," Miranda said.

Majority of respondents think that some artificial means of contraception are actually allowed, in some cases, by their religion.

"I have talked to Catholic Church authorities and they say that litigation is not allowed in any case," Miranda said.

Eighty percent of the 1,200 respondents were Catholics.

It was conducted among some 300 respondents, aged 18 years and above, taken from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and the national capital region.

Majority, or 73 percent, of the respondents were married and 80 percent Roman Catholic.

The questions pertained to respondents' awareness of family planning methods and their views on whether or not candidates who support such methods should be supported in the coming elections.

Scuffle mars anti-Miriam picket

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA AND ANDREA TRINIDAD-ECHAVEZ

TWO DAYS after reelectionist senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago offered to have herself shot at the Luneta should the administration candidates sweep the senatorial polls, a member of her household attacked protesters who picketed her house in Quezon City.

"P— —! Your noise woke me up," shouted the unidentified young man as he charged at members of the Sosyalistang Kilusang Manggagawa (SKM) who were picketing Santiago's home at Teacher's Village, Quezon City.

The man, in his 20s, fair-complexioned and wearing house clothes, shouted obscenities as tried to grab protesters' placards. He would not give his name.

Some of the protesters said he was Santiago's nephew but this could not be confirmed.

Some 20 SKM members picketed Santiago's home at about 11 a.m. yesterday to highlight their campaign against traditional politicians (*trapos*).

"Voters should reject Miriam and other *trapos* like her who have no qualms n@bout abandoning principle to promote their vested interests," said Ruel Garcia, SKM vice president.

"She has become the *trapo* she used to rail against in 1992. It's clear that it was just a big hoax and she almost fooled the masses, especially the youth," Garcia added.

Santiago ran for President in 1992 but lost to Fidel Ramos.

Garcia said yesterday's picket was just the start of planned protests to be held outside the homes of *trapos*, including those belonging to the administration People Power Coalition.

He said the group plans to go to the houses of former speaker Manuel Villar, senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Gringo Honasan, and former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson. Villar is running under the PPC.

Other militants, meantime, said it would be a waste of a bullet to shoot Santiago a la Jose Rizal if the administration senatorial bets sweep the May 14 elections.

Instead, the fisherfolk group Pamalakaya urged voters to reject Santiago's reelection bid, as well as the bids of six other senatorial candidates identified with ousted President Joseph Estrada, who surveys showed might win in the elections.

"She's really one in a million. Her exceptional behavior does not merit a single bullet, much less a single vote," said Gerry Albert-Corpuz, Pamalakaya information officer.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno, on the other hand, said the statements of the opposition Puwersa ng Masa candidates, particularly Santiago and Enrile, not only showed their arrogance but the danger they posed to the country.

Enrile had said that if the opposition swept the senatorial polls, he would work to bring Estrada back to Malacañang.

Corpuz scored Santiago and Enrile for their "allegiance" to Estrada, describing the two as the stereotypes of "third world puppets" and "political butterflies."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 27, 2001
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ezk 47:1-9, 12
Gospel: @Jn 5:1-16

There was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, there is a pool (called Bethzatha in Hebrew) surrounded by five galleries. In these galleries lay a multitude of sick people—blind, lame and paralyzed.

(All were waiting for the water to move, for at times an angel of the Lord would descend into the pool and stir up the water; and the first person to enter after this movement of the water would be healed of whatever disease that person had.)

There was a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him, and since he knew how long this man had been lying there, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" And the sick man answered, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; so while I am still on my way, another steps down before me."

Jesus then said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his mat and walked.

Now that day happened to be the *sabbath*. So the Jews said to the man who had just been healed, "It is the *sabbath* and the Law doesn't allow you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The one who healed me said to me: Take up your mat and walk." They asked him, "Who is the one who said to you: Take up your mat and walk?" But the sick man had no idea who it was who had cured him, for Jesus had slipped away among the crowd that filled the place.

Afterwards Jesus met him in the Temple court and told him, "Now you are well; don't sin again, lest something worse happen to you." And the man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. So the Jews persecuted Jesus because he performed healings like that on the *sabbath*.

Commentary

As we come closer to Holy Week, the readings become more focused on the conflict between Jesus and his enemies. How silly and petty people can be! The Sabbath in its original intent was meant to point to the life-giving and life-sustaining act of God vis-à-vis the created world. Just as God-Creator is so, humans created in his image and likeness must be also life-giving and life-sustaining. The Sabbath was also meant to signify God's liberating action for his people to be free from all burdens and thus be in genuine solidarity with one another. Just as God-Redeemer is so, humans made free as God's own children in baptism must also be liberating. A man who had been sick for 38 long years was at last made whole to be more alive, freed from the burdens of his sickness. But people were upset over his picking up his mat and walking. Sometimes, we can be very silly and petty in our religiosity.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (OBLIGATIONS AND CONTRACTS)—Novation—Novation of a contract is never presumed. It has been held that "in the absence of an express agreement, novation takes place only when the old and the new obligations are incompatible on every point." Indeed, the following requisites must be established: (1) there is a previous valid obligation; (2) the parties concerned agree to a new contract; (3) the old contract is extinguished; and (4) there is a valid new contract. The requisites of novation are present in this case. The 1989 Loan Agreement extinguished the obligation obtained under the 1987 credit accommodation. This is evident from its explicit provision to "liquidate" the principal and the interest of the earlier indebtedness. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Panganiban, Third Division, Security Bank and Trust Company, Inc. v. Cuenca, G.R. No. 138544, October 3, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

DOJ won't declare Dacer dead yet

BY R. NAZARENO

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice is not inclined to issue a death certificate for missing public relations man Salvador "Bubby" Dacer.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said he denied the request of Dacer's family to have him declared dead so it could collect on his insurance.

Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corbito, have been missing since Nov. 24, 2000 after they were abducted along South Superhighway.

According to Perez, the Dacer family has been asking for a death certificate "not only with the National Bureau of Investigation director (Reynaldo Wycoco), not only with me, but also with President Macapagal-Arroyo."

"We cannot recommend that a death certificate be issued because no one has seen the remains of Bubby Dacer," Perez said.

And as such, Perez said they had no choice but to base any presumption of death on the Civil Code.

The Civil Code provides that a person may only be presumed dead after four years in a situation where there was danger of death. Otherwise, the presumption may be made only after seven years and this would only be for the purpose of division of his or her estate.

"As such, we have to let some time pass before we reach any presumption of death," he said.

Perez said the Dacer family had wanted to collect on the insurance of Dacer with an American insurance company.

"But this could not be done because the needed period for which a man may be presumed dead has not yet come," Perez added.

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'Enough of people power'

DUMAGUETE CITY—Former President Fidel Ramos cautioned Filipinos against resorting "too often" to people power, saying the country needs time to create new wealth for a growing population.

"We can't afford a peaceful revolution every 15 years. We can't always be as lucky," Ramos said, referring to the two people power revolution in 1986 and 2001.

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OPINION

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Presumptuous demands

EDITORIAL

HAS IT come to this—that a common criminal can make demands on the government and that a not-so-common prospective indictee can threaten the government with a revolt if he is not given justice?

The not-so-common prospective indictee first. He is deposed President Joseph Ejercito Estrada. Recently he said that there would be a revolt if he was not given justice in his cases, the implication being that it would not be justice if he were convicted. Is he pressuring the courts to acquit him—this at a time when the cases have not yet even been filed and when a mountain of evidence is accumulating that would prove his guilt?

Now, for the common criminal. Actually he is no common or ordinary criminal. First, because he is the Philippines' version of the fictional Hannibal Lecter. And second, because in the past he was handled (and apparently is still being handled) by the government with kid gloves. It appears that he has special talents or abilities because despite the murder charges that he is facing he was able to leave prison for a long stretch of time.

Last Thursday, Manero escaped from his detention cell at the Sarangani Provincial Jail. Now he is making four demands: First, that the government set aside an order revoking his pardon by former President Estrada. Second, that the hearing of the double murder case against him set for May 7 be moved to an earlier date. Third, that there be a speedy trial of the cases of his fellow inmates at the jail. And fourth, that the suspension of the jail warden and the jail guards be lifted.

There may be merit in the second and third "demands," keeping in mind the common saying that "justice delayed is justice denied." But they should not have been presented as demands but as petitions, pleas or requests. There are proper ways of doing these things in our system of justice. Manero did not have to escape from prison to be able to make these petitions.

As for the first and fourth items, Manero is in no position to make these "demands." He has been convicted of murder and he should serve his sentence. His "demand" that the suspension of the warden and three jail guards be lifted should not be granted. The four jail personnel should be made to suffer the full penalty under the law for allowing a dangerous criminal to escape. They should be investigated, and if it is proved that they were in cahoots with Manero, they should be punished for infidelity in the custody of prisoners.

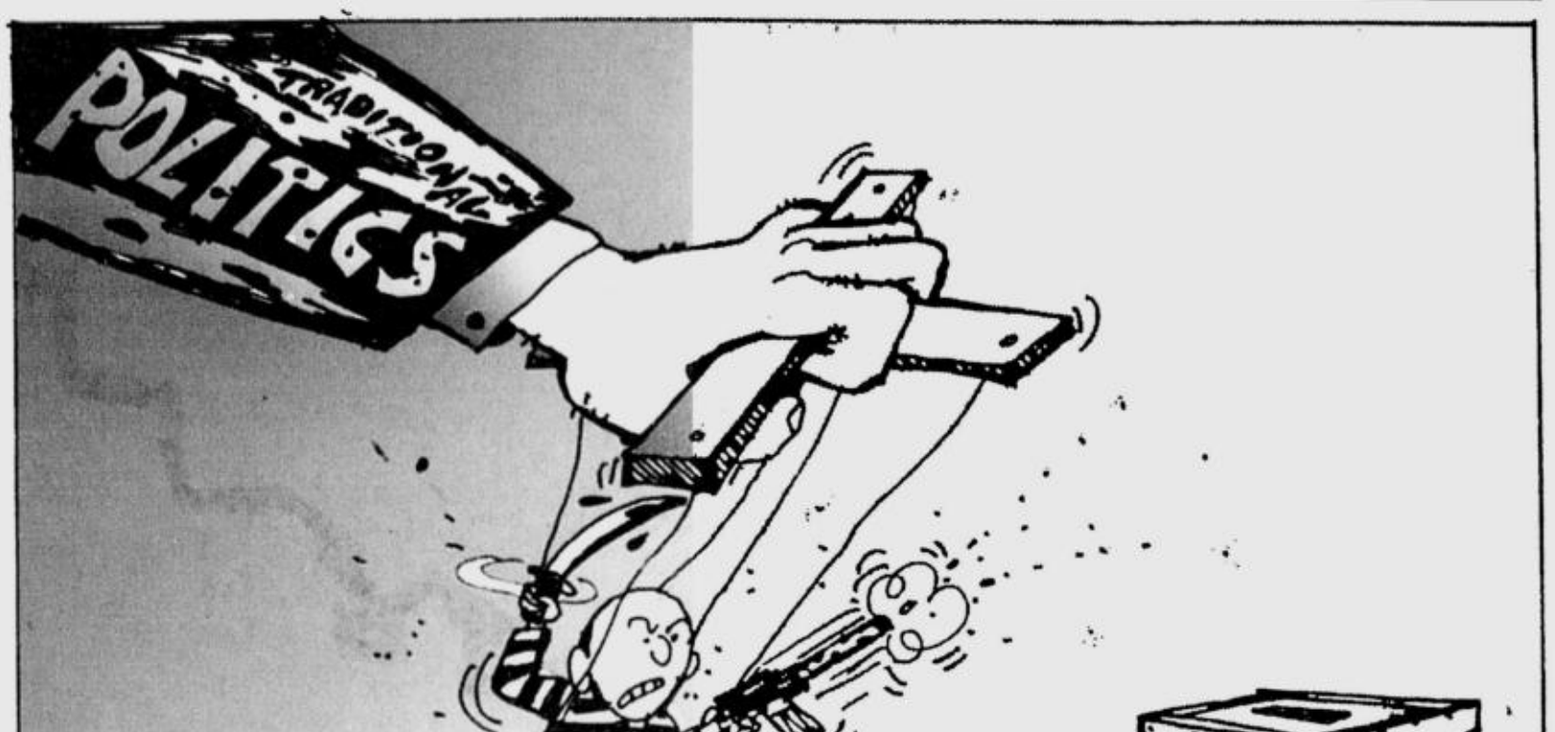
Why is Manero so influential? Why can he get what he wants? Why is he so cocksure that he can afford to present "demands" to the government? Is there something that the people should know about him and his protectors and patrons in government?

This is not the first time he has escaped from prison. In the late 1980s, he was serving a life sentence for the murder of Fr. Tulio Favalli in 1985. This was a well-publicized case. After killing Favalli in broad daylight, Manero is said to have scooped up parts of the priest's brain and eaten them. Manero escaped in 1992 from the Davao Penal Colony. It is suspected that he was able to escape with the help of some police officials. The speculation is that he was used for some sinister purposes in the 1992 elections.

Manero was later recaptured and imprisoned in the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa. Pardoned by then President Estrada, he was later arrested and detained for a slaying in 1977 in Sarangani. Now he is out of prison again. And the suspicion again is that he will be used for certain "special" or political purposes in the coming elections.

If the Macapagal administration is sincere in its protestations of fighting criminality and restoring law and order, it should waste no time in recapturing Manero and returning him to jail. And put him in a maximum security prison guarded by people who can be trusted and who cannot be corrupted.

Manero has no business making demands on government. The government, for its part, should show that it means business in its law and order campaign by rejecting all of Manero's demands, recapturing him and putting him back in jail.



Metro mayors spreading pollution, corruption, death

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SEE what Metro Manila and its development authority, the MMDA, are doing to neighboring municipalities. They are spreading pollution, corruption and death to their neighbors.

Two farmers were shot by their three neighbors in San Miguel, Bulacan, for opposing the dumping of Metro Manila's garbage in their barangay. Their assailants were going to be paid P500 per dump truck by the contractor collecting Metro Manila garbage. Their barangay is Sibul, a national historical site where Biak-na-Bakto (where Aguinaldo signed the Pact of Biak-na-Bato) is located. Sibul is also an important source of potable water for Metro Manila, but the city slickers are going to pollute that source by dumping their garbage there.

This is going on not only in Bulacan but also in other municipalities and provinces around the metropolis, as far north as Nueva Ecija and as far south as Batangas. When the San Mateo landfill was closed and the MMDA could not find any other province that would accept its trash, which accumulated in the streets, MMDA chair Benjamin Abalos abdicated the job and told the mayors to look for their own dumps. *Kanya-kanya na.* So the mayors or their contractors have been bribing barangay, municipal and provincial officials of neighboring areas to accept their refuse. And that's what they have been doing since the garbage crisis, clandestinely dumping their garbage in other people's backyards.

Metro Manila's streets are still littered with trash, but where do you think the trash that is collected end up since there is no dump in the metropolis, except Payatas which is reserved for Quezon City? In Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Nueva Ecija and perhaps other places we haven't discovered yet. The residents of these places don't usually notice the dumping because the trucks arrive in the dead of night.

This is immoral and unfair, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should immediately stop the practice. We are endangering the health of the people around Metro Manila. She should stop pretending that she doesn't know what is going on.

She has given Abalos an impossible task. With the Clean Air Act banning incinerators and without a legal dump, where will Abalos put the 6,000 tons of refuse that Metro Manilans throw away daily? Recycling, composting and segregation are good—in the long run. But what do you do with the trash that have accumulated and are still accumulating at the rate of 6,000 tons every day?

Even if you put all the environmental NGOs to work recycling and composting the trash, they would not make a dent on the backlog. The few success stories that are trumpeted are achieved in small communities but they cannot be replicated immediately in the whole metropolis. It would be wonderful if everybody segregates, recycles and composts garbage but it will take time to achieve this. And even in the best situation where everybody cooperates and does his share, there would still be at least 20 percent residue left. That's still 1,200 tons of garbage daily. Where do you dump that without a dumpsite?

We are fooling ourselves and taking advantage of our neighbors by dumping our refuse in their backyards. Someday this will boomerang on us when the epidemic that will hit them spreads to us. The President should form an emergency body (but faster than Aventajado and Binay) to address the problem. Don't wait for the epidemic to break out and the first corpses to be counted.

* * *

Actually, the garbage crisis is the fault of the courts. A consortium has already won a contract in a public bidding to dispose of Metro Manila's garbage. It would segregate, recycle and compost the garbage—exactly what Abalos and the environmental NGOs are advocating. The residue will be compressed, wrapped, baled and used for landfill. It would have been a good answer but a losing bidder filed a petition for temporary restraining order which was granted by the judge. Although the restraining order is supposed to be "temporary," the judge has not yet decided the case until now, years after it was filed, in spite of the urgency of the garbage crisis. And the MMDA, the Office of the Solicitor General and the Supreme Court have not bothered to prod the RTC judge to move faster. It is as if the judge is willfully sitting on the case. At the very least, he is guilty of incompetence for being too slow in guiding the case along.

There is a new technology in garbage disposal. The garbage, mixed or segregated, is ground into small pieces, a binder is added and the mixture is compressed into blocks. The resulting blocks are as hard and waterproof as concrete and can be used for reclamation, road or residential house construction.

The process of the winning bidder needs only the addition of the binder, the cost of which would add only a few pesos per ton to the cost of disposal. But if the blocks are used for land reclamation, the government would have hectares and hectares of valuable seafront land in due time. No matter the cost, the government would end up with hefty profits. Besides getting rid of the trash and protecting the environment at the same time.

Right bark, wrong tree

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER reading several letters in newspapers from parents complaining about watching a general patronage movie with their kids, only to be assaulted by trailers depicting graphic sex. I've heard the same complaint expressed verbally in family gatherings. I've had the same experience myself, and though I think my boy's brain is bound to get more warped by obscenities in real life than by sex in movies, I've also found the experience oppressive.

I also remember someone telling me not entirely laughingly shortly after People Power II that nearly all the local movies that were being shown at that time were sex-oriented. She had just looked at the movie page, and there side by side, like scantily clad women in a sauna parlor, were movies that depicted men and women in various poses of ecstasy with titles underneath that left little to the imagination. Indeed, while driving on the way to the office, she had just seen huge billboards on the roadside baring the same things, but magnified a hundredfold, to a public that included children.

And I've just read several letters from the e-mail sent by people who say they are concerned about the proliferation of skin flicks and would like to see something done about them. The "*pito-pito*" movies, they say, have been teeming of late, which should make us the sex-movie capital of the world.

I sympathize entirely with these concerns. I do think something ought to be done about showing adult trailers in a general patronage movie. I do think something ought to be done about showing adult billboard movie ads to the general public. I do think something ought to be done about the proliferation of skin flicks—though my own alarm in this regard has to do far less with the presumed moral torpor that comes from watching them than from the patent mental degradation that comes from watching them; such movies reduce us to a race of cretins. I worry as well that they might spell the death of Philippine movies, which have reached heights of grandeur and can—if some current movies, including "Live Show," are anything to go by—reach new heights of grandeur again.

Which brings me to a crucial point. I do think something ought to be done about these things. But I do think this may **not** include, firstly, banning movies like "Live Show." That is idiotic. That does not curb obscenity, it abets obscenity. No, more than that, that **is** an obscenity. By no stretch of the imagination can "Live Show" be called a skin flick, or worse, a pornographic movie. It is an extremely intelligent and well-crafted movie that does the nation proud. I can only tell the people who have written me to say that they agree with the church initiative notwithstanding that they have not seen "Live Show" that they are doing the movie an injustice, they are doing the moral reformation crusade an injustice, they are doing themselves an injustice.

Truly, we ought to do something about skin flicks. But what is needed is not less but more exercise of critical judgment to weed out the good from the bad, the moral from the immoral, the serious from the *pito-pito* movie. That is precisely what was so patently immoral about Jaime Cardinal Sin's demand to have "Live Show" excised from public view, though neither he nor his vociferous witch-hunters had seen it. And that was what was so patently immoral about removing Nick Tiongson (his resignation was forced on him) from office, **because** he demanded that exercise of critical judgment. Curbing obscenity cannot happen by lashing out at all movies that seem to be so. That is an obscenity unto itself.

"Doing something" may not include, secondly, allowing the moral terrorists, as Tiongson calls Sonia Ronda and her cabal, to decree what the public may or may not see. "Live Show," they say, is not "uplifting." That is so because it does not have an uplifting subject matter. By that definition, Vittorio de Sica's "Bicycle Thief," which, like "Live Show," is as depressing as hell, depicting as it does the levels of desperation Italians reached after the war, is not uplifting. Neither is the bulk of movies that made it to the 100 best movies of the last century in various lists.

Having come from a Catholic school, I do know what it means to have narrow-minded Catholic censors guide your movie-going life. I remember from elementary that we had a classification of movies posted on the bulletin board, ranging from A to C. Watching the A movies gave you indulgences, watching the C movies, also called "Condemned," got you a reservation in hell. The A movies included "The Sound of Music," the C movies included "La Dolce Vita." I'm glad I did not particularly mind committing mortal sin and so improved my mind—and the state of my soul.

But, finally, and infinitely more importantly, "doing something" may not mean simply complaining about skin flicks and the bad movies coming out of the local movie industry in general. "Doing something" may only mean **doing** something, which is patronizing the good movies that are coming out of the local movie industry.

If skin flicks proliferate, it is also because **you** make it proliferate. If bad movies proliferate, it is also because **you** make it proliferate. You make it so by not watching the local movies that are not skin flicks, that are not bad, that are in fact some of the best in the world. Mike de Leon made "Bayaning Third World," a landmark movie that explored new ways of storytelling (which other directors have borrowed since), and how many of you saw it? De Leon lost money from it, which should not help persuade him to get out of his reclusive life again. How many of you saw "Markova: Comfort Gay" or "Deathrow" or "Tanging Yaman" in the Metro Manila Film Festival last year? How many of you knew, or bothered to know, that last year's film festival was one of the best ever, nearly all its entries being of exceptionally high quality?

There are limits to what the MTRCB can do, and should do. If bad movies and skin flicks proliferate, it is also because—no, it is primarily because—most movie producers will not risk money on high-minded projects. You do not watch them anyway. The few who do not always get to earn plaudits to make up for their loss. Sometimes, they get to be ignored, like De Leon, or pilloried like Joey Reyes. Or more than pilloried, crucified on the cross by the new Pharisees.

Evil flourishes, we keep saying, because good people stand by and do nothing. It's the same thing with movies. Skin flicks flourish because decent folk won't patronize decent movies. Go out and do something about that.

Mitra-Peña return bout in Palawan

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN PALAWAN'S second district, the talk of the town is the Mitra-Peña fight all over again. But this time it's no longer former Speaker and 1992 presidential candidate Ramon Mitra (who passed away one year ago last March 20) vs his longtime political adversary, former Environment Minister Teddy Peña, but Monching's youngest son and political heir, 31-year-old Abraham "Baham" Mitra, who's taking on Peña, now 68. Not only is the young Mitra less than half the age of Peña, but there's a long history of political fighting between the two camps.

* * *

In 1984, during the campaign for the Batasan Pambansa elections, this columnist, then a political reporter for the oppositionist Mr. & Ms. Magazine, flew down to Palawan together with some media colleagues to cover the "grudge fight" between Laban oppositionist Monching Mitra and Minister Teddy Peña for what was then the lone district. We watched Mitra campaign in the scenic island of Cuyo. With the assassination of Ninoy Aquino just a year earlier, he handily trounced Peña and became one of the key leaders of the opposition in the Batasan. That 1984 bout between the two was termed a "grudge fight" for in 1969, Mitra, then a reelectionist congressman who had defeated longtime Rep. Gaudencio Abordo four years earlier, fought for the first time against the formidable Peña, a UP and Yale law graduate. Mitra trounced him in 1969. Then in 1987, the first congressional elections since Edsa I, Mitra and Peña fought again, this time in the second district of newly subdivided Palawan. Mitra defeated him again and went on to become the first post-Edsa Speaker and presidential candidate in 1992 of the party he founded, the LDP. He lost to Fidel Ramos, and except for an attempt to run for senator under the same party in 1995, he retired from politics altogether.

* * *

It is a tribute to Peña's tenacity that he refused to call it quits despite successive defeats. In 1995, he ran for Palawan's second district vs reelectionist Rep. Amor Abueg and lost that fight. Now Abueg, who is winding up his third term, is running for governor under Lakas, but Peña has returned to the ring once more in the May 2001 elections, this time against Baham Mitra. Will Baham trounce Peña once more? For one thing, Baham has the *pulgada*. The Mitra name still tugs at the heartstrings of many Palaweños, as the late Speaker is credited with having put the province on the map, especially after he ran for the highest post in the land.

I was in Palawan last week to attend the first death anniversary of Monching at the invitation of his widow, the former Cecile Blanco, and I could sense the warmth and affection his province mates still hold for him. As he lay seriously ill of cancer last year, Monching returned to Palawan to look for a spot where he could be buried. He chose the windswept promontory beneath the lighthouse in Puerto Princesa, that commands a breath-taking 270-degree sweep of the sea and the mountains of his birthplace, the small town of Inagawan, which he left when he was 15 years old. To this day, it is said that fisher folk, when they put out to sea, call out to Monching to help them get a good catch. His burial place has been fixed up by Cecile and Monching's cousin, former Defense Assistant Secretary Lulu Ilustre, who runs a radio station and the only TV channel in Puerto Princesa. Today the site has become a tourist spot where people gather to catch the sunset or the moonlight.

* * *

As Mitra lay dying, he also anointed his youngest son, Baham, to continue the political tradition he started in Palawan (his other four sons, led by the eldest, Dado, are businessmen while a fifth, Ramon Jr., is a Marine major). Baham, who is LDP provincial chair, is no stranger to politics since he apprenticed in the Speaker's office as special assistant and ran his father's senatorial campaign in 1995. But even as he revels in the famous name, Baham now appears to be his own person. A San Beda College management graduate with business and world politics courses in the University of California in Los Angeles, Baham had set up his own private businesses and worked in Sycip Gorres Velayo and one or two multinational corporations in Makati, prior to his appointment by President Estrada as presidential consultant for Palawan and public-sector representative in the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development. Nearly three years ago, the bachelor candidate moved back to Palawan, the only one among Monching's sons to do so. Baham cuts an enormous appeal among the youth with the good looks he inherited from his *mestiza* mother and the easy charm and boundless energies he got from his dad.

* * *

His opponent Peña, who was born in Aborlan, would doubtless garner votes if only because this could be his last hurrah in politics. But Baham's appeal is that he is the *"Bagong Sigla ng Palawan"* and *"Bagong Mukha, Ngunit Subok na Pangalan."* The fact that his mother comes from an old Iloilo political family, the Aldeguers, helps win votes among the myriad Ilongo settlers in the province. Cecile, who did not actively campaign for her husband in his many political fights, now plans to do so for her youngest son. Baham is fully aware of criticism that the Mitras had left Palawan, and assures the folks that he has returned for good. *"Habang buhay ang samahan nating ito,"* he puts it. He wants to push the development of the second district, which is the lower half of the long island, as an agricultural and economic base, in contrast to the tourism and natural resources thrust (because the natural-gas wells of Malampaya are located there) of the first district, where Rep. Vicente Sandoval is a reelectionist candidate.

Baham is still learning to speak the native Cuyonon dialect fluently, but he makes up for it with his engaging smile, sending the young female voters into squeals. Monching would have smiled approvingly.

* * *

Mitra and Peña are considered the major protagonists for the second district's nearly 200,000 votes, largely because they are thought to be fighting over Puerto Princesa, which has nearly 40 percent of the total district votes, while the eight towns have the other 60 percent. In reality, there are two other candidates who are no push-overs, namely, Myrna Lacanilao, the three-term lady mayor of Brooks Point in the southern tip and the former three-term Ilongo mayor of Narra, Clarito Dimaala. Brooks Point and Narra command 12 percent and 15 percent of the votes, respectively.

The governorship fight is also interesting. From what I gather, it's neck-and-neck battle between PPC-Lakas' Amor Abueg, three-term Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn of the LDP, and Lakas Independent Gov. Joel Reyes, who succeeded the late Gov. Salvador Socrates, whose plane tragically disappeared into the sea last year.

'Juicy' books

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"KALAMANSI with Honey" is the quirky title of a book of essays and articles on women's health by Dr. Susy Pineda Mercado, former undersecretary of health and (much as I hate to introduce women like this) wife of senatorial candidate and former Defense Secretary Orly Mercado.

For the book launching last night at Powerbooks Megamall, I was asked to deliver a short message, which I'm reprinting below:

In the title-essay of this collection of essays and articles on women's health, the author Dr. Susy Pineda Mercado recounts how even the simplest of tasks, such as preparing *kalamansi* juice for the family, is for a woman replete with several decision crossroads. Should she prepare a single glass or save time and money by preparing an entire pitcher beforehand? Should she mix in the sugar now, or let each member of the family blend the juice according to his or her individual taste? Then there's the question of what sweetener to use: white or brown sugar or honey? Which is more nutritious? Hot or cold? And do I keep the left-over *kalamansi* rinds for rinsing off the grease from my dirty dishes? Lastly, shouldn't I just give up and open a can of pineapple juice instead, since the label says it's enriched with vitamin C anyway?

In the same spirit that animated the essay, let me tell you how I ended up choosing my outfit for this evening's affair. First I asked myself: casual or dressy? If I come garbed in too casual wear, *baka sumama ang loob ni Susy* because it might mean I don't take her or her book seriously enough. *Kung masyadong* formal *naman*, people may think I'm putting on airs and trying to upstage the author—difficult as that may be. What color blouse should I wear? Violet, the women's color, or red, the color of celebration and prosperity? Basic black, I decided, should do for now. And does this occasion deserve a trip to the beauty parlor? Naah, I love Susy, but however significant, her book launching still isn't a beauty parlor kind of event.

* * *

THIS narration of the pained process of decision-making that comes before even the simplest of tasks for women may sound funny to others, especially men. But this isn't just a symptom of women's alleged penchant for complicating what should be fairly simple affairs. It's also a symbol of the complications in women's lives, of their tangled and multifaceted relationships. As Susy says in her essay: "When women search for ways of improving their health, much of our decision-making is intricately locked into the different roles we have to play on a day to day, minute by minute basis."

In this book, Doktora Susy seems well aware of the many personas that the typical Pinay has to adopt to live up to the challenges of her many roles in life. Nothing is too trivial or silly for her attention, from "Pamela's Pimples" to "Zero's Cracked Nipples," from a woman's accident-prone boyfriend to a *balikbayan's* yeast infection. More important, no topic is too controversial or shameful for her practical but impassioned examination. In this seemingly lighthearted book on health targeted at a layperson's level of understanding, we can find essays on the "hidden epidemic" of family violence and violence against women, and on ways by which society and the medical establishment could find better ways to address this social problem.

* * *

I FIRST met Susy when, as chief of staff of then health secretary and now reelectionist Sen. "Let's DOH it Again!" Johnny Flavier, she helped convene a strategy session on the department's observance of Women's Month. A month we are celebrating right now, by the way.

It was at that meeting, if I remember right, that the issue of violence against women was first proposed as a public health problem and not just a criminal or justice issue. How fitting, therefore, that the next time Susy and I collaborated extensively, it was in a conference on the health sector response to VAW, with Susy launching the "Violet Ribbon Campaign" to advocate for greater involvement of health workers in detecting, reporting and treating cases of domestic violence.

Here's a salute, then to a champion of women's health. Here's to one woman, whether within or without government, who has devoted her life's work as a physician to health promotion in communities and health advocacy in the wider arena. Here's to her particular devotion to addressing the health needs of women, who are, after all, the caregivers of families and societies. It is the mother, the *lola*, the *ate*, who is expected to look after members of the family who fall ill. But who will look after the women when they are the ones who get sick?

All the more reason, then, to take women and our issues seriously, even when it takes us forever to dress up, or to fix a glass of *kalamansi* with honey.

* * *

THIS evening, the Women's Media Circle is launching volume 2 of "Bodytalk: The XYZ Guide to Women's Body and Health." The book launching will be held at the Australia Center along Paseo de Roxas in Makati.

Though I am one of the book's authors, I'm still excited about the launching since I have yet to see an advance copy. I'm told the second volume promises to be even more controversial than the first. While the first "Bodytalk" touched on issues of body image, practical health and hygiene tips, and relations with the opposite sex, the second delves into the more serious and problematic areas of young women's health and lives, including violence, abortion and sexual orientation.

Are such topics "offensive" or "tending to corrupt" the morals of young women and men? Only if we want to keep them ignorant of the more serious issues they may or may not confront in their lives. In which case, ignorance is not bliss but injustice.

'After the Galleons': a review

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

IT is always a pleasure to read a well-written, diligently researched and annotated history book. Now that Holy Week's around the corner, here's a book you may want to take with you on that quiet stretch of beach, or if you've opted to enjoy the silence of the city, here's an instructive as well as entertaining companion.

Benito J. Legarda Jr.'s extensively researched "After the Galleons" is a must for anyone interested in the commercial history of the Philippines in the 19th century. Having said that, let me add that the subtitle of the book should have been "Influence Peddling and Other Information Needed to do Business in the Philippines." It goes without saying that Dr. Legarda was speaking of our wicked colonial days where government positions were up for sale and the permits to ship goods on the galleon had a fee as often as not.

Well documented is the case of an entrepreneur par excellence, Francisco Xavier Salgado, whose fortunes in mining, agriculture, industry and commerce rose and fell depending on who was governor. (If that sounds familiar, blame Dr. Legarda.) For the first 15 years of his career, Salgado worked in government, as an accounting clerk in the finance department and then as sergeant major in Zamboanga which may explain his knowledge of the workings of government. In 1750 he was deputy to the governor of Camarines where his interest in mining might have been aroused by some previously worked mines in Mambulao. When the governor general, the Marquis de Obando, sent Fr. Sebastian San Vicente to conduct a survey, Salgado offered to underwrite the venture.

With Obando on his side, Salgado was able to extend his lease on the wine monopoly for six years without bidding. (Now why does that evoke a feeling of déjà vu?) Needless to say, the decision was nullified after Obando's term.

Salgado ran afoul of Governor General Arandia who denied giving him permission to hire skilled non-Christian Chinese laborers to make anchors, plows, pots and pans from his iron mine, causing Salgado to suspend operations after he had invested more than P50,000. Lucky for him Arandia died and the acting governor, Archbishop Rojo, offered to authorize the reentry of skilled non-Christian Chinese. But by this time Salgado had lost interest in the business.

During the British Occupation (1762-64), Salgado distinguished himself in serving the Spanish government on the side of Simon de Anda. It was he who transported the royal funds out of occupied Manila at his own expense to Pampanga via Laguna. Salgado also transported P2.5 million from the *patache* from Mexico that had landed in Palapag, Samar, eluding the British. From there the money traveled to Camarines, then to Tayabas where it was unloaded and transported to Pampanga under constant threat of British attack. There is no record that Salgado asked for a commission or that any part of the money was missing.

Aside from losing a son-in-law and his investment of P360,000 on a galleon captured by the British, Salgado managed to earn the ire of two judges who had worked under the British and the attorney general by the name of Viana. As a result, he had difficulties gaining concessions after the war.

Governor Anda whose feelings of *utang na loob* toward Salgado was understandable awarded him concessions in a mining venture in Masbate. But before Salgado could ship men, supplies and arms, Anda died and some officials who were none too fond of him bided their time issuing the permits (as they say you can't fight City Hall) until Salgado abandoned the project.

He had also initiated an indigo project in Caluang, Laguna, but made the mistake of bypassing Governor Jose Basco y Vargas and sending some cinnamon samples (from another project) directly to Spain. The governor felt slighted and forthwith accused him of lack of effort, non-viability of his indigo project and ambitions to build himself an estate at the expense of the government. The indigo monopoly that he had worked out was thus annulled.

"After the Galleons" isn't only about the dangers of cronyism. There are other entertaining morsels like the information that the choir-book lectern in the cathedral in Mexico City was carved here and shipped via a galleon, as was a revolving tabernacle that arrived in San Francisco in 1781 and which is still in use in Mission Dolores in that city.

Dr. Legarda also informs us that "thousands of Filipinos settled in Mexico (as did thousands of Mexicans in the Philippines) and in the state of Guerrero, especially in Espinalillo, one can see marked Malay features in much of the population as well as Philippine words, family names, and customs such as the manner of cooking rice." Today one can still find roadside stalls outside Acapulco selling *tuba fresca*. Yet our present cultural exchange with Mexico is practically nil.

If there's anything like a reading list still in existence in our colleges, this book definitely should be part of it. It isn't that other books do not carry the development of Philippine trade after the last galleon left or the rise of domestic exports, but it isn't often that it's done in a language that is readable, simple and elegant.

Freudian slips

YOUNGBLOOD

Lolita Villa

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

DESPITE the triumph of People Power II, some people still think that one person cannot make a difference. They still think Edsa (which began with Gov. Chavit Singson, who was mocked for launching a suicidal crusade) was an insubstantial revolt that achieved little more than change the hands that drive a hopelessly ill system.

I'm sure time will prove the pessimists wrong. But never mind the future. We only need to look back at the events of the past that led to the present to see that if there is one lesson from this year's People Power, it is that the actions of the least of us can have damning consequences. Let there be no mistake about it: we reap what we sow.

Take the part we play in setting the course of the nation, for instance. Being one among several millions of citizens, there's only so much I can do about, say, bad governance. But apart from instigating a rebellion through text or marching through the streets to frighten the powerful, I think I can still make a difference by, well, just voting.

I am not an undiscerning voter, but I admit I did not exercise too much prudence in making my choices during the last elections. There were some slots on the ballot on which I scribbled the names of people whom I suspected even then not to have what it took to be good public servants. But since they were the ones whose names I could easily name recall, it was better the devil you know than the devil you don't for me. What's a few dubious selections compared to the 80 percent for whom I really wanted to vote? Well, if the 10-11 vote in favor of hiding the contents of that infamous envelope served any useful purpose, it's to remind us that every vote counts. Now I have to live with the fact that I had a hand in putting some dimwits in the Senate.

But in May, I will have the chance to redeem myself. We can't always thoroughly examine every single candidate in an objective manner, but we can exercise good judgment in sifting through the information provided by the mass media. Also, recent events can be used as a surgical knife to slice into the hearts of those who claim to be "servants of the people." If you've been watching and listening to the candidates, you can have a fairly good idea of the candidates to who you would never entrust the future of our country.

Take Channel 7's "I-Witness" feature on the 11 senators who voted against the opening of the second envelope from Equitable PCI Bank. Some of the statements made by both reelectionists and non-reelectionists were either shocking or alarming, and it would be a mortal sin not to take their explanations into account when one tries to decide whether to vote for them or not.

Take the case of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile. Recalling his very obvious bias for the impeached President Estrada during the Senate trial makes me wonder what it took for a distinguished citizen and long-time public servant to openly take sides in a hearing where a judge is required to be impartial.

The answer to this came from Enrile himself. Twice on national television, he accused the people who demanded that the envelope be opened of being ignorant about the real meaning of truth. He recalled an incident during the Aquino administration when Jaime Cardinal Sin and President Cory Aquino allegedly accused him unjustly of subversion and rebellion. His long memory about an incident that had nothing to do with the impeachment trial only exposed him to be a man who lets his personal grudges cloud his better judgment. He was actually saying that he had to side with Joseph Estrada just because he disliked Estrada's enemies?

Also during the same TV show, Enrile was asked why he was seeking reelection to the Senate. His reply was: *"Nalulungkot ako pag wala akong ginagawa.* I love the game of politics."

This is hardly a very noble motive for taking part in making decisions that could influence the well-being of millions of Filipinos. Enrile regards public service as nothing more than a game. There is no mention about a desire to help put this sick country back on its feet. There is only his love for a game. If this is the only thing Enrile wants, he should find a new hobby, and leave us alone.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is hardly any better. Her shameful bias for the deposed president during the trial and even now is a complete reversal of the reputation she had cultivated as an enemy of graft and corruption.

In the same TV show, Santiago dismissed those who were critical of her as idiots and "anonymous insects" who did not deserve her time of day. She said she only valued the opinions of her professors at Oxford and Harvard, but not those of worthless Filipinos who could not even pass the UP entrance examination. Hello! Santiago may not value other Filipinos' opinions, but she sure needs their votes to keep her job.

Santiago's notion that brilliance is synonymous with being right is dangerous. For me its enough reason to strike her name out of the list of senatorial candidates I will vote for.

Although they are not running for reelection, I find it useful to take note of the disturbing statements Senators Robert Jaworski and Ramon Revilla made during the show. Jaworski tried to present a repentant face by expressing his sympathy for those who were at Edsa. But I still cannot decide which is more acceptable: to have the right motives and commit a mistake, or to do the right thing for the wrong reason. When asked how he would vote if presented with the same issue as the opening of the second envelope, Jaworski said, *"Eh nakita na natin ang* response *ng sambayanan."*

This only shows Jaworski to be weak and fickle. I would have understood it if he said he would change his vote now because he saw new angles that he had missed before. A true leader must not make his decisions on the basis of what the throng dictates. Many people may disagree with me, but I am more willing to forgive those who voted against the opening of the envelope out of principle and not politics.

For his part, Revilla explained that he had planned on voting to open the envelope but ended up voting against it because he didn't like Rep. Joker Arroyo's answer to his question. This indicates his immaturity and his inability to make wise decisions. What if, the envelope, like the thousands of decisions these lawmakers make in the course of their term, were the key to peace or prosperity? Revilla would just throw it away for some petty grievance.

These Freudian slips are big warning signs that should be enough to make us take the coming elections seriously. I'll say it again, the smallest decisions we make can affect the well-being of millions, just as the decision of the 10 million Filipinos who put Estrada in power made all of us suffer. If the politicians I mentioned win again, I am afraid I might have to agree with Santiago that Filipinos are unthinking insects and "inferior life forms."

Lolita Villa, 25, has a bachelor's degree in literature from the University of Santo Tomas and works as a freelance writer.

Notice to Youngblood contributors

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Voting for candidates with vision

THE KISSING of babies, the shaking of hands, the singing, the dancing feats and frenetic waving are mere political gestures signifying nothing. Here we go again choosing media idols, movie actors and political dynastic kingpins rather than programs for governance.

Why do I get the feeling that this election is a test as to who is more popular, Joseph Estrada or Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo? Why do I see a lot of political *rigodon* and no discussion of economic program? Do we really have a party system in our country? What party has an ideological direction? How mature are our people to elect candidates with mission and vision? Are election campaigns mere political fiestas? Will the educated among the candidates have a fair chance in this political popularity contest?

Meditate on our national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal's wisdom: "*Tal pueblo, tal gobierno* (As the people are, so is the government)." To Rizal, people and government are correlated and complementary; a fatuous government would be an anomaly among a righteous people, just as a corrupt people cannot have honest rulers and wise laws.

Pray that we will vote for the program of government rather than for popular candidates whose academic, political maturity and preparation are wanting, or else we will see the writing on the wall sooner than expected.—**SAMUEL P. FERNANDEZ, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Sta. Mesa, Manila**

LETTERS

A loss to public service

NATIONAL Computer director general Ramon Ike V. Señeres is a comely gentleman, a hands-on manager and despite his superior skill in the world of computer technology, one does not get to appreciate this man's qualities immediately because of his humility. I was disturbed by Neal H. Cruz's column last March 16, on civil service eligibles as it pertained to Señeres. I was surprised to learn that he had been replaced and I was worried and saddened by it.

I met Señeres when he was coordinating the computer system, and networking it all by himself in the penitentiary as part of the National Crime Computer set up. The chance meeting did not even last five minutes. As a social psychologist and having spent the greater part of my career analyzing the behavior of people, especially convicts, I knew when to appreciate or critique a person. Señeres is a perfect gentleman, whose professional bearing no one can dismiss. So simple is the man that anyone, like me, would rather look up to his figure as a model of what good government officials ought to project.

Later in the evening, Señeres was being interviewed on cable TV. The dutiful and humble man before the clerks in our document section was on television responding to questions with ease and competence. I thought that if the government had a dozen more like Señeres, it would do better in relating with the people and society in general.

Public service lost a valuable asset in Señeres. We can only hope that there will be others like him who will give public service the dedication he has.—**VENJO TESORO, superintendent, Bureau of Corrections, Muntinlupa City**

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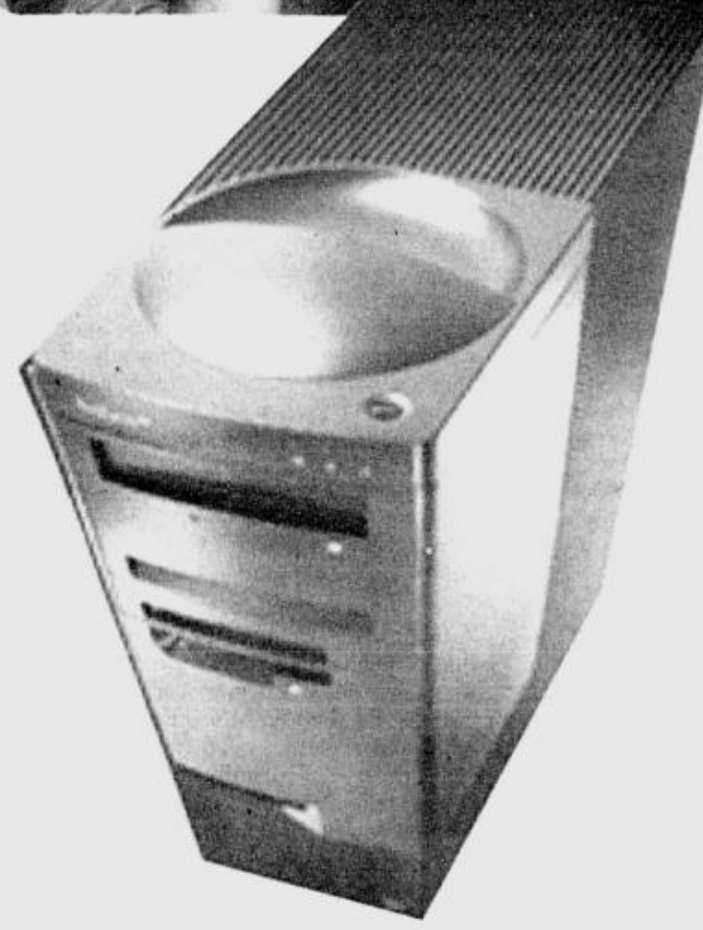

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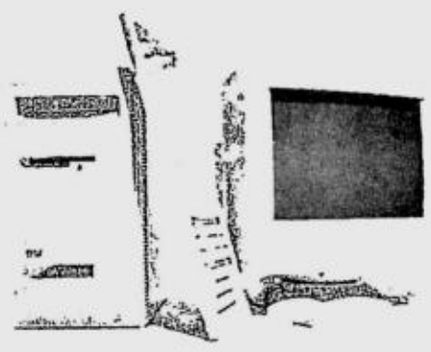

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PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Moral panic

"SOCIETIES appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people..."

That excerpt comes from a book "Folk Devils and Moral Panic" published in 1972 and written by a British sociologist Stanley Cohen. Cohen was describing the public's reaction to gangs of young people called "Mods" and "Rockers." Cohen wrote about how the British mass media amplified people's fears, resulting in an exaggerated view of the dangers posed by these young people.

The current controversy over the film "Live Show" is an example of this irrational moral panic. Look at what's been happening. "Live Show" was approved by the previous Movies and Television Ratings and Classification Board (MTRCB). This approval is good for 5 years and cannot be changed except by presidential intervention, which should take place only after the appeals process. In the case of "Live Show," all the rules were violated, from the cardinal hectoring the new MTRCB head Nicanor Tiongson to pull out the film, to the President banning (although her spokesperson Renato Corona said it was a suspension) the film even before a review could take place.

I'm writing this on Sunday and the review is scheduled for Monday, to be handled by a committee of three. Two of the committee members are presidential adviser Renato Corona and anti-porn zealot Sonia Saldivar-Ronda, both of whom have been vocal in opposing the film. I don't know why they're even bothering to do a review when the President has declared the ban (now she's calling it a ban) non-negotiable and that this is part of her ongoing moral revolution from the top.

Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has now called for a dialogue between artists and moral theologians but this may be difficult given the state of moral panic we are in. A dialogue is possible only if both sides are willing to listen to each other but the power equation is skewed right now against the liberals. The bishops know they have control over the President. Note Corona's chilling declaration that the film ban was an exercise of "police power of the State to safeguard public morals."

A dialogue is not possible when you have people claiming the right to judge a film without even having seen it. (First we had psychic lawyers objecting to questions before they could be asked, now we have psychic censors.) Neither will the dialogue prosper if you have the likes of Saldivar-Ronda (herself a psychic censor) insisting that pornography causes rape and AIDS. It does not help that mass media feeds into this frenzy—one newspaper had a headline the other day about a grandfather supposedly raping someone after he had watched "Live Show." Give me a break—to prove "Live Show" causes rape, you'd have to ask why there were thousands more of other men and women who saw "Live Show" and didn't rape anyone. As for the alleged pornography-AIDS link, I think Saldivar-Ronda owes an apology to people who have HIV/AIDS—she trivializes their plight by blaming their condition on pornography.

But then maybe the moralists know something we liberals don't. Jesus Elbinias, a columnist in the Manila Bulletin, commends the cardinal for opposing "Live Show." He notes the recent reports of priests raping nuns in 23 countries, including the Philippines and wonders, "Can priests contain their urge after watching 'Live Show?'"

Moral panic can become self-fulfilling. The moralists scream about how films like "Live Show" will corrupt the values of the young, but precisely that's why we have an MTRCB that restricts the film to viewers aged over 18. If the law had been properly enforced, then it would have been more difficult for the young to access the movie. Now with the ban, there's a thriving trade for pirated VCD copies, which even a 6-year-old can purchase. (Following the ban, demand for the VCDs has soared, driving its price up from P70 to P150.)

Other countries have had their episodes of moral panic over film. The first British film censors board in 1916 had a long list of scenes that were to be prohibited in films, including "indecorous dancing" and "unnecessary exhibition of under-clothes." British censors also once asked for a rewriting of the script of an Ingmar Bergman film because of certain "problematic" words—"lust" had to be changed to "passion," "lecherous fantasies" to "unspeakable dreams."

Times do change and people realize how silly some of these fears are. A society also becomes more liberal as it learns to respect people and divergent views. Only authoritarian governments still use censorship today, usually theocracies invoking "moral law" (as Jaime Cardinal Sin does) and communist regimes that cite the need to protect "public morals" (as our President does). A ratings system is based on a respect for divergent views. If you don't want to watch an R-18 film, then that's fine but no one—bishop, president or MTRCB head—has the right to pull out that film without due process.

Let's face it, the moral panic we see today, and the trend toward banning and censorship, only reflect the condescending view that the Filipino cannot think for himself or herself. The moralists make no bones about this—I've heard them on television talking about the need to shield "the uneducated" and "the poor" from the bold films. It's an arrogant elitism, reflecting the upper classes' fears that the teeming unwashed masses might rush out to rape and pillage just because a film like "Live Show" is shown.

Cohen writes that moral panic may eventually affect the way society thinks of itself. I couldn't agree more. If the moralists have their way, we will produce another generation of Filipinos believing that we are spineless sinful creatures who need to entrust our lives to the self-righteous dictates of bishops and presidents. That would be the ultimate obscenity.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.org

The WORLD
MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Bush wants Macedonia sealed to weaken rebels

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush said Sunday he would like to "seal off" the northern border of Macedonia "to prevent people and arms from going to the rebels."

"I hope, off course, that the (Macedonian) government is stable, and we're able to seal off the border to prevent people and arms from going to the rebels," Bush said outside the White House, after attending church and going for a five-kilometer jog.

The United States has about 5,600 troops deployed in neighboring Kosovo as part of a Nato-led peacekeeping force charged with maintaining stability in the violence-torn Yugoslav province.

The comment came two days after Bush issued a stern US condemnation of "violence perpetrated by a small group of extremists determined to destabilize the democratic, multiethnic government of Macedonia."

Macedonian forces said they had pushed Albanian rebels from six villages in the hills above Tetovo on Sunday after launching a long-awaited offensive under cover of a huge artillery barrage.

Army spokesperson Col. Blagoja Markovski said troops has taken Gajre, Lavce, Lisec, Drenok, Teke and Selce—six villages he claimed were at the heart of the so-called National Liberation Army's defenses.

But the offensive seemed to have heightened internal tensions in Macedonia as the main opposition ethnic Albanian party, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, announced it was pulling out of parliament in protest at what it called the "increasingly aggressive" attitude of the Army.

In his statement Friday, Bush refuted the rebels' claims that their struggle would help Albanians in the region secure their rights, and urged them to work for change through a political process instead. *AFP*

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S. Korea, US, Japan meet on N. Korea

SEOUL—Senior foreign officials from South Korea, Japan and the United States yesterday launched crucial talks here on coordinating policy toward North Korea, officials said.

The one-day Trilateral Consultation Meeting was the first since US President George W. Bush took office in January. The last meeting was in October.

The South's foreign ministry described the meeting as a "brain-storming" session aimed at helping the allies adjust policy toward North Korea.

"The meeting is significant as it means the reactivation of a three-way policy coordination mechanism, which has been defunct since Bush took office," a foreign ministry official said.

South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Yim Sung-Joon met with US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Thomas Hubbard, and Kunihiko Makida, director general of the Asian Affairs Bureau of Japan's foreign ministry.

The Bush administration is reviewing its policy toward North Korea. At a summit this month with South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung, Bush expressed skepticism about the North's desire for reconciliation.

Talks with North Korea on its missile program have been suspended, reflecting growing diplomatic tension between the United States and North Korea.

"Through the session, we hope the United States will reflect our position in its policy review," the South Korean ministry official said.

Hopes of long-term peace on the divided Korean peninsula improved after the leaders of the North and South met in Pyongyang in June.

But the rapprochement has entered a critical stage since the election of the Bush administration, with North Korea accusing it of taking a hardline stance toward the communist state.

The impoverished North has threatened to end a moratorium on missile test launches and resume its nuclear program, suspected of being used for weapons development.

The North's 1998 launch of a long-range rocket over Japanese territory into the Pacific caused international panic. Bush has partly used the North's missile threat to justify the National Missile Defense (NMD) system.

The North withdrew suddenly from ministerial talks with South Korea two weeks ago, setting alarm bells ringing in Seoul.

On Monday, the North blasted Washington for justifying its arms buildup, claiming the United States wanted a military edge to "strike the DPRK (North Korea) by surprise."

"If the US keeps insisting on this new issue in a bid to put pressure upon the DPRK and wring concessions from it, it will only render the situation more complicated," it said through its state newspaper, Rodong Sinmun.

The three-way meeting also comes amid major changes to the South Korean Cabinet with President Kim Dae-jung forming a new foreign and security team.

Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn was replaced by Han Seung-soo, a former envoy to Washington, who is reportedly on good terms with Bush's foreign and trade team.

Han's appointment underlined South Korea's priority on improving relations with North Korea and the United States. *AFP*

58 Kenya boys killed in fire at dormitory

NAIROBI—At least 58 secondary school students were burnt to death when a fire broke out in the early hours of yesterday at a dormitory in eastern Kenya's Machakos district, police said.

All the dead were boys, police said in a statement.

Some 139 schoolchildren were sleeping in the dormitory when the fire broke out at Kyangulu Mixed Secondary School's main dormitory at 1:40 a.m. yesterday, 28 of whom were seriously injured.

The statement said the injured were taken to the Machakos district hospital, around 4.8 km from the school.

Machakos district is about 64 km southeast of the Kenyan capital on the main Nairobi-Mombasa highway.

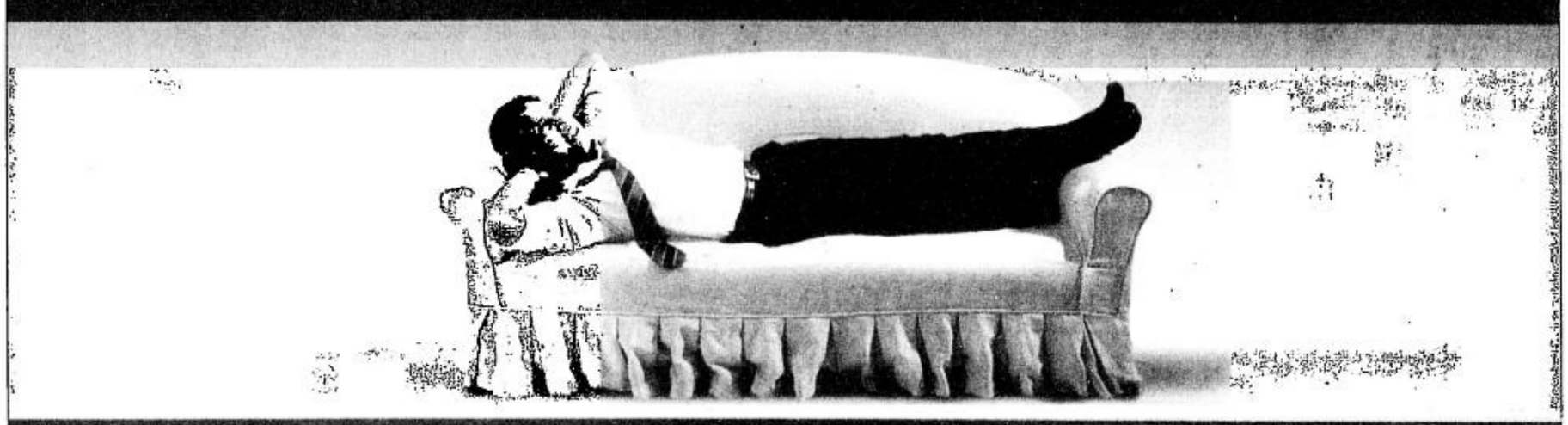
Police have launched an investigation into the cause of the fire, which some witnesses at the scene claimed was arson, according to interviews on private Nation radio.

On March 26, 1998, a fire swept through a dormitory at Bombolulu boarding school for girls near the Kenyan port city of Mombasa, killing 22 pupils and leaving some 80 other girls injured.

Around 144 girls were sleeping in the dormitory when the fire broke out. The cause has never been discovered.

Most secondary school students in Kenya attend boarding schools. *AFP*

Finally, an education plan created for



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Arab nations poised to impose new economic boycott of Israel

AN ISRAELI soldier points his weapon equipped to fire teargas canisters in the face of a Palestinian during clashes between Palestinians and Jewish settlers March. 25 in Hebron. The clashes erupted following the funeral of 21-year-old Khaled Badawi, who was shot dead in a gunbattle. REUTERS

RIYADH—Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal yesterday said that his country favored Syria's proposal to reactivate an economic boycott of Israel by Arab countries.

"We support the Syrian proposal . . . relating to firm action on the Arab economic boycott of Israel," suspended in the Middle East peace process, Al-Hayat newspaper quoted Prince Saud as saying.

The proposal was included in a draft resolution calling for the reactivation of a measure under which Arab countries will be asked to boycott Israeli companies as well as foreign firms doing business with Israel.

The resolution, drafted by Arab foreign ministers meeting Saturday and Sunday, will be submitted to Arab leaders at the March 27-28 summit for ratification.

"The boycott (of Israel) is a powerful and peaceful weapon that we should not give up," Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara had said Sunday.

"The boycott of Israel will soon be reactivated because it is a necessary tool to establish peace," he said without spelling out the modalities of an eventual boycott.

Prince Saud also warned that "if Israel continues to block the peace process in a way that brings about its failure, it will have chosen confrontation."

"Arab countries have made peace a strategic choice," Prince Saud said, stressing that "the Arabs have faced up to Israel for 70 years and are ready to continue doing that for a further 70 years."

But officials and analysts concede that any decision on a boycott must be non-binding, particularly for Egypt and Jordan, who have signed peace treaties with the Jewish state.

"Even if the summit agrees to endorse the Syrian proposal of boycott I don't expect it to be imposed on Egypt and Jordan, because if they fail to meet their obligations toward Israel it will backfire on them," an Arab diplomat said.

"If Jordan and Egypt do not respect the economic terms of their treaties with Israel, Israel will stop respecting the political terms of the treaties," the diplomat added. *AFP*

Kim replaces nearly half of Cabinet

SEOUL—President Kim Dae-jung yesterday replaced nearly half his Cabinet in an effort to allay public discontent with his government's handling of the economy and other domestic issues.

One of the most prominent resignations was that of Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn, who was held responsible for a series of policy fumbles related to Kim's delicate rapprochement process with North Korea.

The shakeup had been anticipated for weeks after Kim, whose popularity has plunged in recent opinion polls, expressed disappointment with the performance of some of his Cabinet members.

Park Joon-young, a presidential spokesperson, said nine out of 22 ministers were replaced.

Kim kept Prime Minister Lee Han-dong, whose job is largely ceremonial. He replaced most of his economic ministers, but the government's economic reform program was expected to remain in place. Critics have accused the government of not implementing the reforms fast enough.

Lim Dong-won, 65, head of the government's National Intelligence Service, was named to head the Unification Ministry, which handles Seoul's so-called "sunshine" policy of engaging North Korea.

The appointment of Lim, a key supporter of Kim's policy, indicated that there would be no change in South Korea's engagement policy toward the North's communist government. South Korea fears cooling ties between Washington and Pyongyang will slow its efforts to reconcile with the North.

Han Seung-soo, 63, who served as ambassador to the United States under former President Kim Young-sam, was appointed foreign minister. *AP*

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Europe hard put to contain foot-and-mouth

LONDON—The shadow cast over Europe by foot-and-mouth disease darkened on Sunday as Britain prepared to turn a disused airstrip into a mass grave, Ireland considered extending a slaughter of healthy animals and the Netherlands reported a fifth outbreak.

As the number of outbreaks in Britain rose by 47 on Sunday to 607, the agricultural authorities said they would use the abandoned airfield to bury the overwhelming number of animal carcasses.

About 200,000 animals either infected with the virus or thought to be at risk of spreading it could be disposed of at the airstrip in Carlisle in the northwest region of Cumbria—one of the areas worst hit by the epidemic.

A five-meter wide pit will hold just some of the estimated half a million animals either already destroyed or earmarked for slaughter in a desperate bid to stop the spread of the highly contagious disease.

Army called

The Army has been called in to help with the operation, and military associate Brigadier Alex Birtwistle will help oversee the digging of several trenches.

"In the first part of the cull, we have about 500,000 sheep to take out of farms and slaughter in the most humane way—it is an enormous task, this is a massive problem," Birtwistle said.

Ireland, which reported its first outbreak of the highly infectious disease on Thursday said it was considering extending a slaughter of healthy livestock this week to ensure the country's only outbreak of the virus is contained.

Agriculture Minister Joe Walsh said he would seek advice from veterinary experts on extending the cull up to the border with Northern Ireland to "establish a firebreak."

All healthy cattle and sheep in the immediate area have already been destroyed and authorities are now culling livestock from farms within three kilometers.

Walsh described the arrival of the disease in the republic for the first time in 60 years as a "shattering blow" for the country, where agri-business accounts for about 10 percent of GDP.

Fifth in Holland

The Netherlands, which only reported its first outbreak on Wednesday, confirmed a fifth in a farm in the town of Oene on Sunday.

Although all reported cases have been restricted to the east of the country, agriculture ministry spokesperson Martine de Haan said, "We have not yet been able to determine the origin of the contamination."

The ministry said 130 calves at the farm in question would be destroyed.

In France, where a second outbreak of the disease was reported on Friday, Agriculture Minister Jean Glavany admitted that a European ban on his country's livestock exports would not be lifted on Wednesday.

"From the moment a site is discovered, there is a sort of countdown triggered," Glavany said on Sunday.

"We have started back at zero," he said. "That means at least two more weeks of embargo."

But he stressed that vaccination was not the answer.

"As long as we have a limited number of sites, we can avoid it and I would really like to avoid it," Glavany said.

He said he was doing everything to ensure that France could avoid vaccination because of the economic damage it would do to livestock breeders. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Musharraf won't step down

KARACHI, Pakistan—Military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf said Sunday that he would not step down when his term as chief of Army ends later this year. "I am not going to retire in October," Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup in October 1999, told reporters. Under the Constitution, Musharraf's three-year term as Army chief is set to expire in October. He declined to say how he would legally extend his term in office, to which he was appointed by ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Musharraf denied recent reports that he would renege on his promise to return Pakistan to democratic rule by Oct. 12, 2002, the date set by the Supreme Court. He said elections for the National Assembly, Pakistan's parliament, would be held before the deadline, but declined to say when. *AP*

Fresh rebuke to Haider

VIENNA—The far-right Freedom Party slumped heavily in local elections in Vienna Sunday, its latest poll setback since taking office in a controversial national coalition last year. The result appears to be a personal thumbs-down for far-right leader Joerg Haider who spearheaded the Vienna campaign, drawing accusations of both xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The far-right blamed the "malicious" campaign against it, while analysts said the result could destabilize the national coalition between the Freedom Party and the conservative People's Party. According to final results, Haider's party won 20.25 percent of the vote, losing over a quarter of the 27.9 percent of voters who backed it in Vienna's last elections in 1996. Helene Partik-Pable, the far-right's mayoral candidate, said the slump was due to the heavy criticism of the party's campaign, which was condemned as anti-foreigner while party strongman Haider was accused of anti-Semitism. *AFP*

Vajpayee dares opposition

NEW DELHI—Badly damaged in a corruption scandal that rocked the government, beleaguered Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Sunday challenged the opposition to a show of strength in upcoming elections in five states. "They have called it a war and we are ready to face it. We have the support of the people," Vajpayee said at a huge rally held in New Delhi, the Press Trust of India reported. Elections in the states of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Kerela, West Bengal and Assam are scheduled to be held later this year and will be a test of the government's popularity following the bribery scandal. Vajpayee's coalition government has been facing its worst crisis since Internet news portal Tehelka.com released videotapes showing top politicians, bureaucrats and senior Army officers allegedly receiving bribes to facilitate a defense equipment deal. Two of the website's journalists carried out the sting, posing as arms dealers. *AP*

Vietnam to punish priest

HANOI—Defying a mounting chorus of human rights criticism, Vietnam's communist authorities yesterday prepared to further punish a Catholic priest who dared to speak out to Washington about violations of religious freedom here. A house arrest order imposed earlier this month had failed to silence Father Tadeus Nguyen Van Ly, one of the main official dailies said. He should now be "punished severely by the courts" for his persistent defiance of the regime, said armed forces mouthpiece Quan Doi Nhan Dan (People's Army). *AFP*

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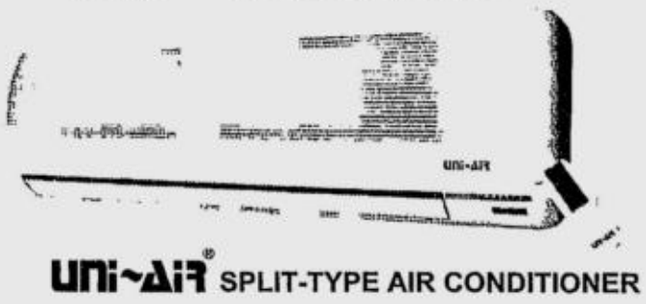
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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

'TORO' FOR P1,000

Live sex shows in Cebu City bared

BY PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

CEBU CITY—For a thousand pesos, "*toro*," a live sex performance, can be arranged employing commercial sex workers (CSWs) from Barangay Kamagayan, this city's infamous sex district.

Lorenz, a pimp in his late 40s and a "*torero*" (live sex performer) in his younger days, claimed he can arrange a *toro* for P1,000. Of the amount, P700 goes to the female CSW and P300 to her male partner.

The woman's partners are often young pimps, pushers or out-of-school youths who hang out at billiard halls and need quick money.

Lorenz said that if one of the paying customers would volunteer to become the woman's partner, this would mean that they get to pay only P700. But the CSW would not be getting the full amount because 50-70 percent of the fee would go to her pimp or "*mama sang*" (handler).

Lorenz, who hassles in the Cabatingan parking area of Kamagayan, said only 12 of the 50 CSWs in his turf were willing to engage in the sex act. These are usually women in their 20's who have been in the flesh trade for about five years.

The younger girls are often afraid to do it or abhor it, Lorenz said.

Nica, a 21-year-old CSW in the area with a tattoo on her arm, admitted to having performed a *toro* once. But she said she would often just dance for a group. The dancing would usually end with one of the viewers asking her for sex while the other viewers would leave the room.

In situations like this, she said, the CSW would ask for extra pay for every sex act she performs.

As no establishment in the Kamagayan vicinity offers "live shows," Lorenz said the customers have to take the performers to a hotel room.

Businessmen and professionals who are in Cebu for a seminar or a conference, young Chinese-looking businessmen and medical representatives are among those who often seek out this kind of entertainment, Lorenz said.

He said "live show" viewers often number three to five.

Lorenz said he could not remember arranging one for foreign visitors. But he claimed that in his younger days, he had sex with a Japanese woman while her impotent husband looked. He performed for this couple once a year for three consecutive years in the early 1990s, he said.

Lorenz said his last performance as a *torero* was in 1995.

Dodong, a pimp in his early 30s who hassles at the back of a well-known university in the city, asked for a higher price of P1,500 for a pair of performers. He said he would ask for P1,000 if no partner was required and one of the clients would pair off with the female CSW.

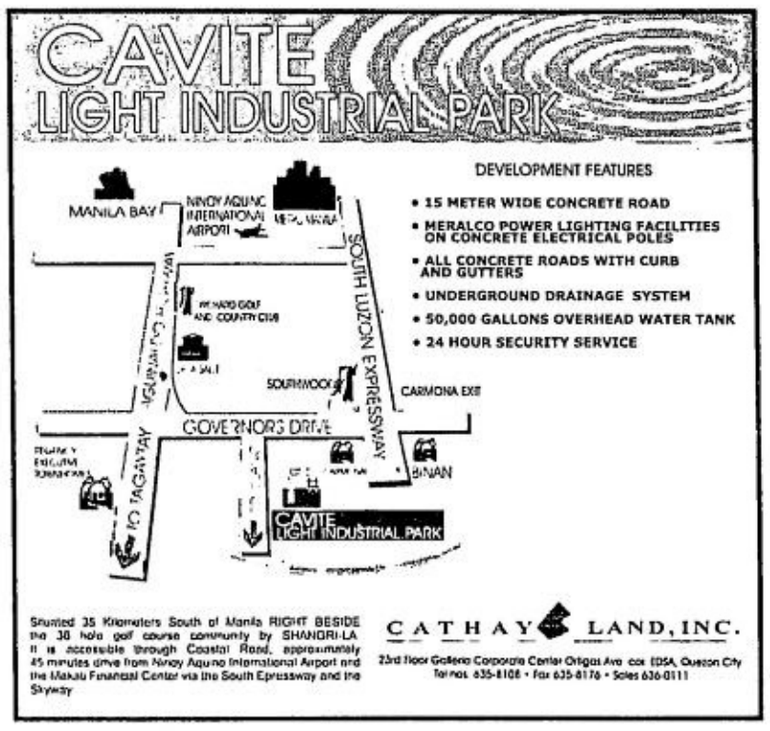
Lorna, a cigarette vendor in her 50s who moonlights as a pimp along Sancianko Street, said she could get one young girl for P300 and it would be up to the customers how much tip they would give the girl for a live sex show.

She said a lower price could be arranged but only if the CSW's *mama sang* is not told because the latter might haggle for a much higher price.

Mona, a teenage CSW who plies her trade mostly in the area close to another university, said she never did *toro* but was willing to try it for P500. A freelancer, she usually charges a customer P300 for sex.

Toro, the subject of the controversial banned movie "Live Show," was rampant in Cebu City in the 1970s up to the early 1980s before then Mayor Ronald Duterte had a successful anti-smut drive that resulted in the closure of a number of entertainment establishments.

Today, the practice persists, although more clandestinely and on a demand-order basis only.



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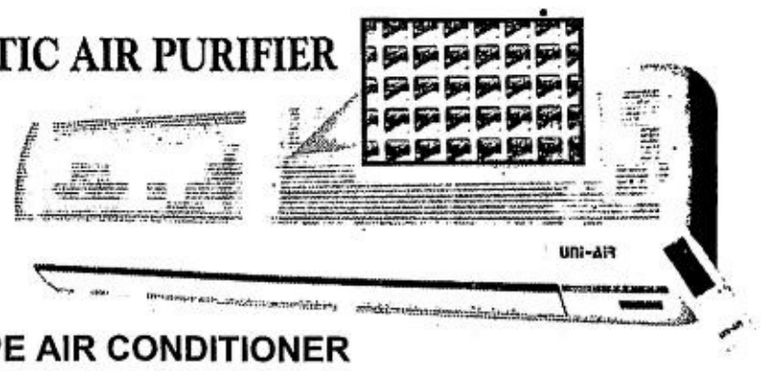

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ROUNDUP

Roco unfazed

NAGA CITY—Education Secretary Raul Roco was unfazed by a protest action staged last week of some 200 employees from the Department of Education Culture and Sports. Roco said the protest was confined only to the DECS accounting department whose employees were affected by his new policy to scrap the 4-percent incentive given by insurance companies to the DECS for collecting the debts and insurance premiums of teachers. Roco said this is aside from the 2 percent that 187 private companies give to the DECS for collecting the teachers' debt payments. *Juan Escandor, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cafgu purge on

KORONADAL CITY—The military said it would "purge" the ranks of Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit following reports that some of the militiamen have been "working" with rebel groups. Maj. Sam Deles, spokesperson of the Army's 601st Infantry Brigade, said several Cafgu men, particularly those assigned in remote areas, have been acting as "agents" of the communist New People's Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Deles said soldiers of the Army's 75th Infantry Battalion on Wednesday captured a militiaman who allegedly connived with communist rebels in raiding an Army detachment in Sitio Kihan, Barangay Kinam, Malapatan in Sarangani on Jan. 29. *Allen V. Estabillo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Calabarzon robberies

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—About P262,000 in cash, jewelry items and other valuables were lost in at least five cases of highway robbery in the Calabarzon areas in a span of four weeks. Angeline Reyes, a duck raiser and feed supplier in Victoria, Laguna, said she and her husband were divested of P252,000 in cash by four Armalite-wielding men in Barangay Santol in Tanauan, Batangas, in late February. Supt. Arsenio Pinacate of the police regional office listed four other cases in which robbers victimized passengers of a Tritran bus in San Vicente, San Pablo City, a jeepney in Bagong Nayon, Antipolo City, a JAM Liner in Calauag, Quezon, and a Crow bus in Barangay Kaylaway, Nasugbu, Batangas. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Man regains sanity

GUINOBATAN, Albay—A man who was allegedly suffering from a mental illness for the past five years regained sanity after surviving an electrocution shock in Barangay Travesia here last week, police reported. Insp. Alberto Barrera, Guinobatan police chief, said Marcelo Perez, 39, was rushed to the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital in Legazpi City after touching a 69-megavolt line of the Albay Electric Cooperative. He regained consciousness after an hour, said a witness, Viking Moraldela. Perez's relatives were amazed that he was able to recognize and name them again after five years, Barrera said. *Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon, Mindanao and Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 33° Lo 24°	Baguio Hi 25° Lo 15°	Tuguegarao Hi 33° Lo 22°
Laoag Hi 32° Lo 24°	Clark Zone Hi 30° Lo 22°	Tagaytay Hi 33° Lo 22°
Legazpi Hi 32° Lo 23°	Bacolod Hi 32° Lo 24°	Roxas Hi 32° Lo 25°
Cebu Hi 32° Lo 25°	Tacloban Hi 32° Lo 25°	Gen. Santos Hi 32° Lo 23°
Zamboanga Hi 32° Lo 25°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 32° Lo 23°	Davao Hi 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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2 dead in pre-election violence

BY CRISTINA ARZADON AND KIRA ESPINO
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
AND EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE PRESIDENT of an association of barangay captains and staunch ally of Mayor Ernesto Go in Currimao, Ilocos Norte, and the campaign coordinator of senatorial candidate Ricardo "Dong" Puno in Maguindanao were killed in separate incidents of pre-election violence on Saturday.

In Ilocos Norte, two men shot and killed Edgar Quinto, 49, while he was playing mahjong with relatives and friends in front of his house in Currimao.

In Maguindanao, Ludovico Bañage, Puno's campaign coordinator, was shot dead in Ampatuan. The victim was also a campaign supporter of Gov. Zacaria Candao.

Witnesses said Quinto, president of the town's Association of Barangay Captains, died from at least seven bullet wounds inflicted by his assailants at close range and in full view of members of his family and friends.

Insp. Chito Esmenda, Currimao police chief, said the assailants made sure Quinto was dead before fleeing toward a forested area.

Citing witnesses, Esmenda said the gunmen walked casually inside the Quinto compound, drew their guns and began firing. They pointed their guns at the victim's sons who tried to chase them.

Police have yet to identify the gunmen but the killing could have been politically motivated, Esmenda said.

Go's supporters did not discount political rivalry as the motive in the killing.

"Wilbur (Go, the former vice mayor) is dead while his father Ernesto is retiring from politics. Quinto would be the next in rank in the political hierarchy of the Go family," a supporter said.

"They were after my father. His death is so painful because my mother saw how he was shot. I just wished my father should not have been killed that way (with such ruthlessness)," the victim's son Edmer, told dzVR Bombo-Radyo Laoag.

In Cotabato City, Bañage, 53, a farmer and resident of Barangay Kauran in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, and a 15-year-old relative were on their way home when they were approached by two motorcycle-riding men.

Sylvia Calderon, Puno's regional political action officer, said the gunmen asked for motorcycle tools from Bañaga, of which he had none.

Calderon said that before leaving, one of the assailants pulled out a .45 cal. pistol and shot Bañaga.

The boy was left unharmed.

It could not be ascertained if the killing was election-related.

Calderon said Puno, who was in Cebu City, "was saddened by the death of his supporter."

Candao's camp also condemned the attack and urged the local police to immediately investigate the incident.

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Local squabbles hound PPC campaign

BY NESTOR BURGOS JR.
PDI Visayas Bureau
AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

ILOILO CITY—Squabbling local candidates of the People Power Coalition (PPC) literally fought over seats during a rally for the PPC senatorial candidates Sunday.

Candidates and supporters aligned with Vice Mayor Guillermo de la Llana and Ilonggo Sen. Franklin Drilon had to stand throughout the program after Iloilo City Rep. Raul Gonzalez reserved the seats for his supporters.

"I paid P6 each (as rental fee for the) chairs for the use of my supporters. I told the other camp that they were welcome to attend the rally as long as they don't occupy the seats," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, a reelectionist, heads the Lakas-NUCD ticket here with mayoral candidate Jerry Treñas, while De la Llana (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) is the mayoral candidate of Drilon's camp.

De la Llana said his supporters who came early in the gymnasium of the Jaro District plaza were told to vacate the seats. The group stayed outside the gymnasium until Drilon arrived. They left after the senator spoke.

The squabble for seats highlights how local politicians are jockeying for recognition as the official PPC candidates. The conflict extends over billeting, holding of press conferences and the conduct of local candidates during the rally.

Gonzalez, who claims to be the PPC head in Iloilo, complained that the PPC delegation was booked at the Hotel Del Rio instead of the Sarabia Manor Hotel, where Gonzalez had made reservations.

The press conference was also a source of controversy. Reporters were confused over three scheduled press briefings in the Sarabia Manor, Hotel Del Rio and Ocean City Restaurant. It pushed through around 7 p.m., an hour late at Del Rio that also delayed the rally.

Ilonggos were also confused over earlier announcements that the PPC had decided not to hold any rally to avoid wranglings between the local Lakas-NUCD and LDP-Conscience Bloc that both claim to represent the PPC.

Gonzalez said De la Llana tried to come on stage with Drilon, in violation of a previous agreement of both camps that only the senatorial candidates would be allowed on stage during the rally. "I merely took a step upstairs to accompany Senator Drilon," De la Llana countered.

Drilon himself had to appeal repeatedly in Hiligaynon for supporters of local candidates to get off the stage.

Those who were left on the stage were the visiting senatorial candidates—Drilon, Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar, Liwayway Vinzons-Chato, Ernesto Herrera, Wigberto Tañada, Ralph Recto, Francis Pangilinan, Roberto Pagdanganan and Senators Juan Flavier and Ramon Magsaysay Jr. The rally was organized by Gonzalez.

The senatorial candidates brushed aside the intensifying intramural conflicts that are straining the campaign sorties of the five-party ruling coalition.

"There's just a misunderstanding," Drilon told reporters of the incident. He said that everyone followed the rules that only the PPC senatorial candidates would remain on the stage and likewise their placards and streamers would be the ones placed over there "to avoid any conflict."

"So I think it went out well," Drilon added.

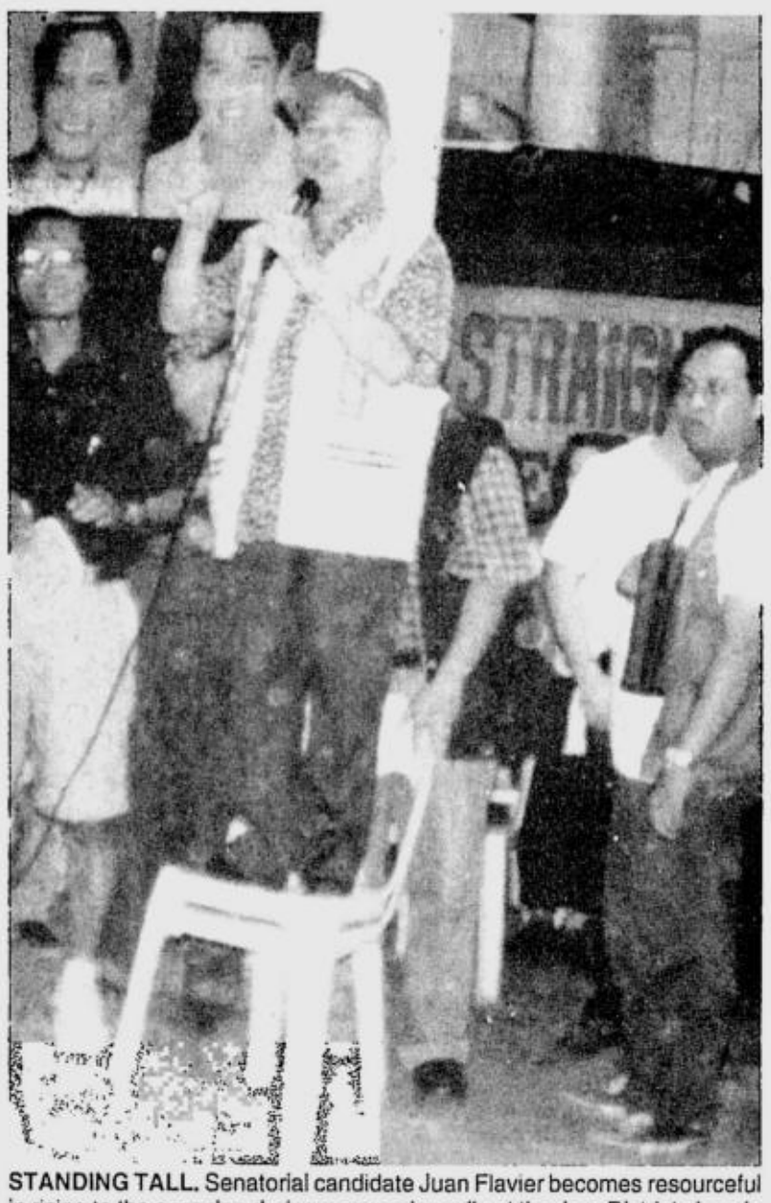
He stressed that local politics here were not expected to affect "the national slate" of the PPC because he said both factions would be carrying the PPC senatorial candidates come May 14.

Gonzalez also downplayed the incident, explaining that he and Drilon had earlier come up with a "compromise" that if the PPC senatorial candidates would visit the province, the rally to be staged here "would only be for the senators and not the locals."

He allayed fears that the PPC in-fighting would lead to the junking of the senatorial candidates, saying that "as far as my ticket is concerned, it can be a 13-0 (PPC win)."

"I committed that to President Macapagal-Arroyo and I will comply with that," he said.

Gonzalez said he could only guarantee the win for the 220,000-voter strong Iloilo city and not the 1-million voter-strong province.



STANDING TALL. Senatorial candidate Juan Flavier becomes resourceful in rising to the occasion during a campaign rally at the Jaro District plaza in Iloilo City on Sunday night. RUFINO GONZALES II

He said he knew that Drilon's candidates, who were with LAMP before, were supporting Puwersa ng Masa candidates Loi Ejercito Estrada and Edgardo Angara.

"Local conflicts are not unique to this election," said PPC senatorial candidate Pangilinan in the press conference before the rally.

Bohol Rep. Ernesto Herrera, another senatorial candidate, said that while the conflicts among local candidates could pose a problem, the national candidates have adopted a hands-off policy on local candidates.

"They all can have their own line-up as long as they carry the 13 senatorial candidates," he said.

On Saturday, Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas Rene Villa, a Drilon ally, and Gonzalez announced separately that a "mini-rally" would be held here.

Gonzalez said they agreed to hold a program at the Jaro plaza, provided there would be no local candidate on stage. No streamers, placards and other campaign materials of both camps were also allowed in the venue.

Villa said the PPC also faced conflicts among local candidates backing the administration in other areas. "It's only in Antique and Aklan provinces were the lines are more distinctly drawn," he said.

But he was quick to add that the Pwersa ng Masa of ousted President Joseph Estrada was also facing similar problems.

'Demolition job' info came from PPC–Lacson

DAVAO CITY—Senatorial candidate Panfilo Lacson on Saturday denied having admitted that the opposition spied on the administration's People Power Coalition.

He said information about the alleged plan by the PPC to do a "demolition job" against the Puwersa ng Masa was volunteered to them by someone from the PPC and was not gathered through spying.

"I never admitted that we were spying. What I said was we got information that they were into a demolition job against certain candidates of the opposition," Lacson told local journalists at the Rizal Memorial Colleges here. The former Philippine National Police chief earlier spoke during the graduation rites of the high school department.

Lacson said the information was contained in a document passed on to them by a staff member from the PPC. The contents of the document was immediately evaluated and found to be accurate, he added.

"When we get information like this, it doesn't presuppose that we got it from spying," he said.

As a policy, Lacson said, the pieces of information coming their way from the administration ticket are carefully validated by their group.

He said the document, titled "Oplan Lucky 9," aims to tarnish the image of nine of Puwersa candidates, particularly former first lady Loi Ejercito Estrada, Lacson, Edgardo Angara, Ricardo Puno, Miriam Santiago, Orlando Mercado, Juan Ponce Enrile and Gregorio Honasan.

Lacson said the ninth politician listed was Sen. Blas Ople, who is not running. "We were wondering why Senator Ople was included, although he is not even running," he said in Filipino.

He said the document enumerated the issues that will be raised against each of the candidates. It indicated that the PPC would try to revive the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office scandal involving Ejercito, he said.

He said the document also noted that Angara would be linked to alleged embezzlement of funds under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act program, and Enrile to alleged human rights violations committed during the Marcos dictatorship. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

4 inmates escape in Capiz town

BY GERRY T. PAGHARION
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—Four inmates escaped Sunday night from their cell at the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology building in Dumalag, Capiz, about 40 kilometers from this capital city.

They were identified as Jose Castor, Silverio Sustitido, Mecasio Villar and Domingo Bajon, all of Dumalag.

The inmates used a hacksaw blade to cut the steel bars of the window of their cell on the second floor of the building and blankets to get down, jail officers reported.

Castor is facing charges of double murder; Sustitido, multiple rape; Villar, illegal possession of firearms; and Bajon, frustrated murder.

Not one of the jail officers assigned on duty was able detect the escape around 7 p.m., it was learned.

It was not known how the inmates were able to get a hacksaw blade. Jail authorities could not also determine where the four fled.

QUEZON CAMPAIGN

Wives of lawmakers running

BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—The wives of "graduating" congressmen, a son of a lawmaker, a recalled city mayor, and a "poor boy who made it big" from Polillio Island.

They are only some of the aspirants in Quezon in the May 14 elections.

The wives of Quezon Rep. Marcial Punzalan Jr. (2nd District) and Rep. Danilo Suarez (3rd District) will try to succeed their husbands in the legislature.

Lynnete Punzalan (Lakas-NUCD-UMDP) is banking on the many recipients of her husband's "Misyon Paglilingkod" (Service Mission) program.

Her husband decided at the last minute not to pursue his gubernatorial bid to concentrate on her campaign.

Punzalan will be pitted against a member of her husband's rival political clan in Tiaong, lawyer Eduardo Escueta of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP).

Esueta, former Philippine Coconut Authority administrator, is seeking to prove that the coconut levy in this coconut-producing province is not an issue.

Provincial board members Avelino Andal (Reporma-Lakas Manggagawa) and Pat Andaman (Liberal Party) are also joining the congressional derby.

But what surprised voters here was the last-minute filing of candidacy of recalled Lucena Mayor Bernard Tagarao as an independent congressional candidate.

Another unaffiliated candidate, Generoso Factor, is also seeking a congressional seat.

Aleta Suarez (LP-People Power Coalition), wife of Representative Suarez, who headed the powerful House committee on ways and means, is facing Mulanay Mayor Joselito Ojeda (Lakas-NUCD-UMDP), a former radio broadcaster, in the fight for the congressional seat in the Bondoc Peninsula.

Young Tañada

Another contender in the same district is Erlinda Marquez (Reporma-LM), widow of former Quezon Rep. Benny Marquez, whose reported wish before he died last month was for his wife to join the next congressional election.

In the 4th district, covering the Lamon Bay area up to the Bicol boundary—the known bailiwick of an illustrious political clan, young lawyer Lorenzo Tañada III (LP) will try to inherit the congressional seat of his father, Wigberto, who is on a comeback bid in the Senate.

The young Tañada's political opponent is the equally young board member of the provincial council, Georgilou Yumol (Partido ng Masang Pilipino), from Lopez town.

Tañada's congressional bid is being threatened by the entry of a distant cousin, Robert Ernest Tañada (Reporma-LM), whose motive for running is being questioned by political observers.

In the first district in the northern part of the province, second-termer Rep. Rafael Nantes (LP), the poor boy from Pollilio who is now the country's sole manufacturer of an industrial battery, is being seen as the only candidate who will win easily.

He is being challenged by a lawyer and former president of the League of Municipalities during the Ramos administration, Agnes V.S.T. Devanadera (Lakas-NUCD-UMDP), from Sampaloc town.

Gubernatorial race

The gubernatorial contest will be a three-cornered fight among incumbent and second-termer Wilfrido Enverga (Reporma-LM-PPC), former Gov. Eduardo Rodriquez (Lakas-NUCD-UMDP) and lawyer Hjalmar Quintana (Nacionalista Party-KKM), who served as the province's officer-in-charge during the early years of the Aquino administration.

Rodriquez, however, is being hounded by an extradition request from the United States to the Philippine government over an insurance tax fraud.

The reelection of Vice Gov. Jovito Talabong (Reporma-LM-PPC) is being seriously challenged by provincial board member Claro Talaga (Lakas-NUCD-UMDP), who is banking on the support of the coalition of several multisectoral organizations.

Movie actor Romeo Vasquez, for the third time, is trying to bag a seat in the 12-member provincial board, along with 29 other candidates.

Crowe wobbles, Roberts swoons on Oscar night

(From page A1)

slave in "Gladiator," beat Hollywood favorite two-time Oscar winner Tom Hanks ("Cast Away"), Ed Harris ("Pollock"), Javier Bardem ("Before Night Falls") and Geoffrey Rush ("Quills").

Wearing the Order of the British Empire medal earned by his photographer-grandfather in World War II, he paid tribute to friends, family and fellow cast members, but made special mention of director Ridley Scott.

"But really folks, you know, I owe this to one bloke and his name is Ridley Scott," Crowe said in his speech.

On a personal note, he added, "When you grow up in the suburbs of Sydney or Auckland or Newcastle, a dream like this seems vaguely ludicrous and unobtainable . . . For anyone who's on the downside of advantage and relying only on courage, it is possible."

Oscars host Steve Martin jokingly accused best actor nominee Tom Hanks of plotting to kidnap Crowe, a reference to recent news that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was checking a kidnapping threat against the best actor winner. It was reported that the FBI had even provided security for Crowe at the Golden Globe awards in January.

Roberts

As expected, Roberts won the Oscar for best actress for her role as the feisty, sexy legal assistant in "Erin Brockovich," leading her to declare, "I love the world. I am so happy."

A giddy Roberts ascended the stage and warned that she would be speaking for a long time "because I may never be here again."

She clutched her first Oscar and said, "This is quite pretty."

Backstage, she realized she had made a major mistake and had forgotten to thank the real life Erin Brockovich, who had stayed home to watch a sick child.

"She knows the esteem in which I hold her, which is quite high . . . with great humility I acknowledge her profusely," Roberts said.

The surprise of the night was the victory of the man Roberts described as "my own personal God," director Steven Soderbergh.

For the first time in 60 years, a director had been nominated for two films. It was the first time in Oscar history that a director in such a position had actually won.

Soderbergh's "Traffic" won three other awards—adapted screenplay, editing and best supporting actor for Puerto Rican-born Benicio Del Toro.

Marcia Gay Harden, an actress admired by peers for her dedication, was named best supporting actress for her role in "Pollock."

Ang Lee, director of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," paid special thanks to "my friends and family in Taiwan, to my collaborators in Hong Kong and to everyone, people in China who helped us so much to make this movie."

AND the winners are (from left): Benicio del Toro, best supporting actor; Marcia Gay Harden, best supporting actress; Roberts and Russell Crowe, best actor, at the 73rd annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles. REUTERS

Best picture "Gladiator" was a throwback to a genre that the film industry had turned its back on decades ago. But producer Douglas Wick said that this year's awards showed just how wrong Hollywood conventional wisdom could be.

Misfits

Wick said this year's crop of winners were misfits, "a bunch of pictures that don't fit into the conventional categories."

"Gladiator," "Crouching Tiger" and "Erin Brockovich" were the kinds of movies that conventional Hollywood wisdom says will never make money, he said.

"You don't make pictures with toxic waste, you don't have pictures with subtitles, you don't do sword-and-sandals, so already a lot of rules were broken," Wick said.

Bob Dylan won the Oscar best song for the rollicking "Things Have Changed," the tune he wrote for the quirky campus drama "Wonder Boys."

"Oh good God, this is amazing," Dylan said by satellite from Sydney, Australia, where he is on tour.

Dino De Laurentiis, a master showman who at 81 is still producing hit movies such as "Hannibal," received the prestigious Irving G. Thalberg Award for a lifetime of film excellence.

The producer, who began his 60-year career in his native Italy working with Federico Fellini and other prominent directors, dedicated the award to "the entire film industry, with the hope they come back alive with the new talent and fresh ideas."

The Academy Awards program began from orbit as astronaut Susan Helms, with fellow crew of the International Space Station floating by her side, introduced first-time host comedian Steve Martin.

"By the way that introduction cost the government one trillion dollars," Martin quipped.

He said that hosting the Oscars is "like making love to a beautiful woman. It's something I only get to do when Billy Crystal's out of town."

Other winners were: director Cameron Crowe for original screenplay ("Almost Famous"), "U-571" for sound editing, "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" for makeup, "Quiero Ser (I want to be)" live action short film, "Father and Daughter" for animated short film, "Big Mama" for documentary short subject, "Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport" for documentary feature. *Inquirer wires*

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PAF plane crashes; woman pilot killed

(From page A1)

1st Tactical Operations Wing in Clark Field, said.

First Lt. Mary Grace Baloyo, one of the pilots, died instantly, Col. Lino Lapinid, PAF spokesperson, said.

Her co-pilot, Capt. Ben Nasayao, managed to eject from the plane and survived. He was brought to the Clark Air Base Hospital.

Jesus Rivera, Mabiga barangay captain, said he saw the plane plummet from about 1,000 feet high before it crashed and burst into flames.

Baloyo was burned to death, according to Vice Mayor Prospero Lagman, who was among the town officials who reached the crash site.

The plane was wrecked, Lagman and Rivera said.

Hotchkiss said the pilots managed to place a distress call to the PAF tower in Clark before it crashed at 3:48 p.m. He said the pilots belonged to the 15th Strike Wing based in Sangley Point in Cavite.

The two reported that they were experiencing engine trouble. They were conducting a proficiency flight from Sangley to Clark and were on a final approach to the runway when the accident happened.

Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor, Air Force commanding general, sent the head of the PAF Safety Office and a team from the 15th Strike Wing to determine the cause of the crash.

Hotchkiss said heavy rain hampered operations to retrieve the victim's body and the plane's debris.

He said the fence in the house of Fil-Homes resident Abelia Tolentino was damaged.

Defensor ordered the immediate grounding of at least 15 OV-10s in the PAF fleet and the suspension of flights of the aircraft. *Reports from Tonette Orejas, Jun Malig and Bert Basa, PDI Central Luzon Desk; and TJ Burgonio in Manila*

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Public opinion.

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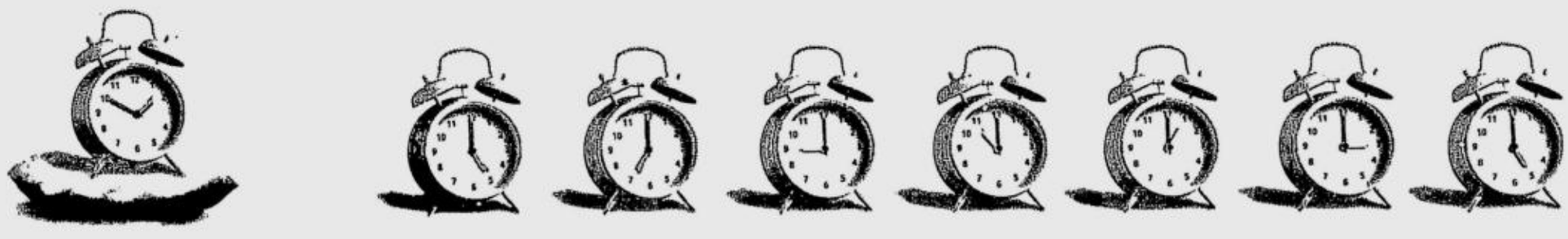

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Irene camp accuses Jacobi of frame-up

(From page A1)

open accounts in its Dusseldorf branch because this "had something to do with money laundering."

He said the bank had only allowed the Aranetas to open accounts "to help the authorities" who had been informed of the alleged plan to transfer funds from an account at the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS).

Schumacher said the bank held open the Araneta accounts for four weeks because the authorities instructed them to do so, in the hope of gathering more evidence against the couple.

"We only had those accounts because the authorities asked us to hold them," he told the INQUIRER.

But in their affidavits, copies of which were obtained by the INQUIRER, Hutcherson and Waters claimed Irene had "no knowledge" of data related to UBS Account No. 885931, which allegedly contained $13.2 billion in 1998.

Reyes, Hutcherson and Waters said the Marcos heiress had not provided Deutsche Bank with any information on her alleged deposits in UBS.

But a Deutsche Bank official who reportedly witnessed Irene sign documents instructing the transfer of her funds from the Union Bank of Switzerland, could serve as one of the witnesses of the German investigation, according to an official at the public prosecutors' office in Dusseldorf.

The banker might be asked to identify Irene, the official said in a phone interview last week.

Waters had earlier identified the banker who helped his group open accounts in Deutsche Bank as a certain Joachim Strache, but the German official did not name the banker who had cooperated with anti-money laundering authorities.

'Jacobi gang'

Hutcherson and Waters claimed that Jacobi was trying to make it appear that the fabled Marcos billions really exist to assure the "dozens" who had bought shares in the recovery project of the viability of their investment.

Reyes said he learned that a number of American investors who were "also victims of this . . . Jacobi scam," had filed charges of libel and fraud against the "Jacobi gang" in US courts. He did not name the supposed investors.

Hutcherson and Waters said the "gang" included Jacobi's lawyer David Chaikin and American businessman Timothy Boardman.

Waters said the exposé was "a last ditch effort" by Jacobi, Chaikin and Boardman to keep disgruntled investors from filing possible lawsuits.

"Furthermore, they are hoping that these recent events will enable them to raise more cash from the Philippine government and unsuspecting businessmen," said Waters. *(Ed's note: The INQUIRER last week printed an article by Waters denying Jacobi's claims, followed by another article by Chaikin disputing the American's story.)*

Hutcherson said Jacobi was creating the impression that the signed instructions containing data on the UBS account were given by Irene to "validate" Jacobi's claim that the account contained billions.

"This episode is another part of Mr. Jacobi's and his group's chicanery to deceive people like me who unwittingly contributed money to his fraudulent scheme of soliciting 'investments' for his so-called 'recovery' projects," Hutcherson said.

PCGG to wait and see

In his affidavit, Waters cited reports of the PCGG, UBS, international auditing firm Price Waterhouse Coopers, and former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada supposedly disproving the existence of the $13.2 billion.

But UBS, which had first denied the existence of the account, later admitted it, while the PCGG is ready to accept reported evidence compiled by German investigators against Irene.

When sought for comment, PCGG acting chair Jorge Sarmiento said the statement from Irene's camp would be treated as "the other side of the story."

He said the PCGG would still await the results of the German investigation to be able to take "an intelligent position" amid the conflicting claims.

'Full cooperation'

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez disclosed that the Philippine Embassy in Germany is holding talks with officials of the German Justice Ministry to determine how to cooperate in investigating the alleged money-laundering attempt.

Manila has already petitioned both Germany and Switzerland for International Mutual Assistance on Criminal Matters.

In a separate interview, Philippine Ambassador to Germany Jose Zaide confirmed that his representative, Edgardo Auxilan, was scheduled to meet today with officials at the Dusseldorf public prosecutors' office.

Among other things, they plan to talk about the extent of Manila's cooperation in the German investigation, he said.

Zaide also said that they were prepared to help the Germans confirm whether the woman who presented her passport at the bank in February was in fact Irene.

"There will be full cooperation from both sides," Zaide told the INQUIRER.

He added that the government had requested access to every document in the case.

In return, "we will help in whatever way they ask us," Zaide said.

Collaboration

Perez said that after the meeting, "we will know from our representatives whether it is still necessary for PCGG and DOJ (officials) to go to Germany."

It was earlier reported that he, Sarmiento and Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo would visit Switzerland and Germany in the next three months to speed up the search for the alleged hidden ill-gotten wealth.

But Perez said yesterday that "if it can be handled by our Philippine Embassy in Germany, then there is no need for us to go there."

Perez added that he and Marcelo had started to "collaborate in handling (the Marcos forfeiture) cases so that we could speed up the (resolution of the cases) which have been pending for the past 14 years."

This is the first time that the Department of Justice has taken an active role in pursuing the money allegedly plundered by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos from public coffers.

'Only in imagination'

But Reyes stressed that the instructions given by Irene for the transfer of funds did not mention anything about billions of dollars, "a stupendous amount that exists only in the imagination of Jacobi."

"Money laundering is the movement of dirty money for the purpose of cleaning it. There must be established facts that the money exists, that it is dirty or ill-gotten, and that it has been moved for the purpose of cleaning it," Reyes said.

"In the Jacobi story, none of those facts existed, nor was there any attempt to show that there was dirty money, much less any movement of funds," the lawyer claimed.

Reyes also hit the INQUIRER for allegedly "exploiting the hoax and scam" and instigating the "unwarranted investigation" of the Araneta couple by Philippine, German and Swiss authorities.

He said the reports were a "classic portrayal" of the supposed persecution of the Marcos family "on the basis of planted disinformation, gratuitous presumptions and sinister imagination—in utter disregard of the law."

4 new National Artists named

(From page A1)

said in his resignation letter as he insisted "Live Show" was not pornographic but a social realist film that merely records the terrible poverty afflicting the nation.

Ironically, one of the newest National Artists, Bernal, had had a storied career battling state censors over the social content and sexy scenes of his movies which had won acclaim here and abroad.

Bernal (1938-1995) studied literature at the University of the Philippines and obtained a licentiate in French literature and philosophy at the University of Aix-en-Provence in France. He became a Colombo Plan scholar and studied film directing at the Film Institute of India in Poona, under the tutelage of the Indian master Satyajit Ray.

Returning to the Philippines, Bernal established himself early on as a leading voice of the cinema with his first movie, "Pagdating sa Dulo" (1971), a gritty movie about the "*bomba*" (soft-porn) film industry before martial law. Starring the irreverent Rita Gomez in what was perhaps the high point of her career, the movie had the hallmarks of what was to become the cinema of Bernal: campy wit, acerbic dialogue, sexy tenor, trenchant characterization, and inventive camera work.

In the following years, Bernal, together with Lino Brocka (who was also awarded the National Artist posthumously) made some of the most memorable films of the so-called second golden age of Philippine cinema. He directed the innovative "Nunal Sa Tubig," which despite the criticism of conservative groups, went on to win the best picture in the Catholic Mass Media Awards in 1977 and was named one of the top international movies of the 1970s by the International Catholic Committee on the Cinema.

ANG KIUKOK

ISHMAEL BERNAL

F. SIONIL JOSE

Bernal's other notable films were "City After Dark" (1980) "Himala" (1981), "Relasyon" (1981), and "Broken Marriage" (1983). Last Saturday, the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino named "Wating," Bernal's last movie, as one of the best movies of the 1990s.

Montano

Severino Montano (1915-1980) studied at UP, Yale and the American University in Washington and organized the famous Arena Theater of the Philippine Normal College "to bring drama to the masses." He wrote, directed, produced and designed his plays, even acting in them. The troupe staged some 200 plays and established the careers of some of Philippine theater's leading lights at present, such as Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana (also a National Artist) and Naty Crame Rogers

Montano also wrote plays that have become staples in the repertoire of theater companies: the full-length "The Love of Leonor Rivera" (1954) and the one-act plays "Parting at Calamba" (1953), "Sabina," and "The Ladies and the Senator."

F. Sionil Jose (born 1924) is probably the country's most translated author and most prolific novelist in English. He studied at the University of Santo Tomas where he edited the student paper The Varsitarian and came under the influence of the kind Spanish Dominican writer Fr. Juan Labrador and Paz Latorena, considered among the top writers of the first generation of Filipino writers in English.

Jose was a highly successful journalist and editor before turning to writing fiction full time. In 1962, he published the best known of his many novels, "The Pretenders," a searing social parable of a poor but highly intelligent man who marries beyond his class. It became the first installment of his Rosales Saga, an epic recreation of the Ilocano and Filipino search for identity and a just and moral social order

The next novels in the saga— "My Brother, My Executioner" (1979), "Tree" (1980), "Mass" (1982), "Poon" (1984)—consolidated Jose's reputation as the most important Filipino novelist in English.

Jose opposed martial law and often ran into trouble with martial law censors. Because of the repressive atmosphere in the country, "Mass" was first published in its Dutch version in Amsterdam, where it became a best seller.

Jose also edited Solidarity, a journal of Asian affairs and ideas. He runs the Solidaridad Bookshop, which continues to be a cultural beehive where artists and writers gather to discuss literary, artistic, social and political currents. At present, Jose is finishing an important novel on Macario Adriatico, the nationalist general who collaborated with the Japanese during the Second World War.

Ang Kiukok

Ang Kiukok (born 1931) was born to Chinese immigrants in Davao and studied at the famed UST School of Fine Arts, which started the modernist movement in the country. He trained under National Artists Victorio Edades and Vicente Manansala, and the old master Diosdado Lorenzo. (Ironically, Lorenzo was posthumously nominated along with Ang for the National Artist this year, but his student prevailed.)

Ang's art has evolved from mildly realistic still-lifes and landscapes to the tour-de-force expressionism that fires up his dramatic images of Christ crucified, dogs and fighting cocks.

Because of the livid, morbid—and almost ugly—dimensions of his work, he had early on resigned himself to the fact that he would not be a popular artist. He was wrong. In 1976, after presenting his new still-lifes, his works were gobbled up by art collectors, his photo landed on the cover of Asiaweek, and he was proclaimed "the new Amorsolo."

In the Sotheby's and Christie's auctions of Southeast Asian art in the last five years, Ang Kiukok has steadily commanded fierce bidding, proof of the growing international renown of his strange, supernatural works.

PAOCTF men fired; another anti-kidnap force formed

(From page A1)

lows for the military's active participation in anti-crime operations.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr., Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez are expected to formally sign the joint memorandum this week.

The signing of the MOA came after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the military to help the police in the war against kidnappers and smugglers.

The President said the military could help the police in fighting crime as the government was already talking peace with communist and Moro rebels.

Camp Crame insiders see the President's order as part of efforts to abolish the PAOCTF. Many of its officers are believed to be still working for the senatorial campaign of Lacson.

During Lacson's term as PAOCTF head, most of the PNP support units were stripped of their duties to go after notorious crime syndicates.

A memorandum, dubbed "Oplan Bayanihan," practically legitimized credit grabbing within the PNP by the Lacson-led PAOCTF operatives.

Mendoza welcomed the President's order for the military to take a more active role in fighting crime.

"Alone, the PNP can never be strong enough. Alone, the AFP can never be strong enough. But together, the police-military combination is unassailable, it is impregnable," Mendoza said.

Destroy kidnappers like termites

"Our combination is expected to do the job of weeding out kidnappers like weeds, of destroying the kidnappers like termites and of eradicating the kidnappers like tumor," he said.

During the police-military conference in Camp Crame, organizational details were ironed out for the creation of the AFP Anti-Crime Task Force.

The military anti-crime task force has under its wings the Army's Special Operations Command, the Air Force's Special Operations Wing, the Naval Special Warfare Group and the Marine Force Recon.

The agreement says that the AFP Anti-Crime Task Force, whenever employed for anti-crime operations, shall be under the operational control of the concerned police until the mission is completed.

A joint secretariat shall be established at the PNP headquarters to oversee, monitor and supervise the deployment of the task force.

The police and the military have an existing memorandum of agreement on intelligence and counterintelligence.

The chair of the Senate committee on national defense objected to Ms Macapagal's directive to the military to help in the fight against kidnappers and smugglers.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon warned that soldiers assigned to conduct this kind of police work could commit human rights violations.

Not trained for police work

"The AFP is not organized, not equipped and not trained for police work. They could be vulnerable to committing human rights violations," Biazon told reporters.

He said soldiers are not trained "in terms of the legal aspects of arrests and enforcement of laws."

Biazon warned that the shift in AFP responsibility could lead to a "dangerous conflict of jurisdiction or turf war between the police and the military."

"More seriously, this may result in jeopardizing the AFP's primary function of addressing internal and even external security threats as it will be distracted from focusing on its paramount responsibility," he said.

Biazon said the Macapagal administration should learn from the experience in 1991.

He said her predecessors "committed the mistake of reducing the internal security elements by lessening the Cafgu (Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units) and the regular Army strength and relying solely on the projected effectiveness of the peace talks."

After the Aquino administration regarded the New Peoples' Army as a spent force and transferred the counter-insurgency operations from the military to the police, the NPA and the Moro National Liberation Front gained strength, according to Biazon.

"The government must not be allowed to become complacent by relying on the resumption of peace talks," Biazon said.

Peace talks with the rebels have been pursued by four presidents and the problem is still with us today, according to Biazon.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez defended Ms Macapagal's decision to use the military in the fight against kidnappers and smugglers.

He noted that using the military in fighting smuggling had been done before.

In a radio interview, Golez said Ms Macapagal's father, the late President Diosdado D. Macapagal, had once tapped the Philippine Military Academy Class '62 in the fight against smuggling.

"Members of the PMA class '62, the first batch to graduate during the term of President Macapagal, were detailed at the (Customs Office) before being sent to their permanent assignments," he said.

"They were young and idealistic. They were able to provide a big help in the anti-smuggling campaign then," Golez said.

Golez said the President's purpose in fighting kidnapping was to bring about economic progress in the country.

"The move she had taken here is not only to fight crime. She is also acting as an economist. She knows that if there are problems like this—whether it is serious or not—one kidnapping is one kidnapping too many," he said.

"She knows that this has a big effect on the foreign investment program," he said.

But he clarified that there was no kidnapping upsurge in Metro Manila. *With reports from Juliet L. Javellana and Armand N. Nocum*

Optional sex . . .

(From page A1)

to include celibacy," Bautista said in a press conference at the Foundation University here, where he addressed the University Baccalaureate Service Sunday.

General manager of the Catholic Church-owned Radio Veritas, Bautista said it might be time for priests to avail of "optional celibacy" in the wake of a "very embarrassing" report which said that priests have been committing sexual crimes against nuns in at least 23 countries, including the Philippines.

The report, submitted to the Vatican by an American nun in 1995, documented cases of sexual harassment and violence, quoting the case of a priest who had presided over the funeral of a nun who died after undergoing an abortion at his insistence, and that of a community of 20 nuns who all became pregnant at the same time.

Leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in the country have joined Pope John Paul II in apologizing for the sexual crimes.

Embarrassing timing

"We are very sorry," Bautista said, noting that the news came at "a very embarrassing time" when the Church had been accused of pressuring the Macapagal administration to recall the showing of the movie "Live Show," which is about performing sex on stage.

He, however, clarified that he himself had been content with his celibate life since he was ordained a priest 41 years ago.

Bautista is not the only one who is trying to rethink the discipline on celibacy, according to Fr. Gamaliel Tulabing, spokesperson for the Dumaguete Diocese.

Tulabing would not, however, say who are the others in the Church. "That is his opinion and the Roman Catholic Church is a democratic church, but I don't think Rome will change the discipline because this is the only way we can live in perfect continence with God," he replied when asked to comment on the Bautista proposal.

4th century

Celibacy, which has been practiced by the early Christians starting with Jesus Christ and St. Paul, became part of canon law for clerics only during the 4th century.

Tulabing, a canon lawyer, said the Vatican had not changed its view of celibacy because majority of the priests are at peace with their celibate lives.

"The mere fact that some have been unfaithful to their vows does not mean that we should eradicate celibacy altogether," Tulabing said.

He also said he had not heard of any incident of sexual harassment by priests toward nuns in Negros Oriental, but admitted that there were priests who have illicit relationships, some of which are public knowledge.

Bautista, in his message to the graduating students of Foundation University, said recent developments in the country were making people wonder whether Edsa II really happened.

Bautista pointed to the escape of priest killer Norberto Manero, the claim of deposed President Joseph Estrada that he is still the legitimate president, the multibillion-dollar Swiss bank account of Irene Marcos Araneta, the Supreme Court's issuing a temporary restraining order to the Ombudsman on the filing of plunder cases against Estrada and the ongoing protests on the alleged curtailment of artistic freedom.

Bautista was deeply involved in the 1986 Edsa Revolt and a member of Kompil II, the organization that mobilized the anti-Estrada protest actions that led to Edsa People Power II and the ouster of Estrada.

Gov't, MILF leaders sign accord in secret meeting

(From page A1)

ceasefire with the MILF, which is fighting for an independent Islamic nation, but government troops have been allowed to fire back if attacked.

Sporadic fighting has been recorded in recent weeks in Mindanao, the heartland of the Muslim rebellion, despite the ceasefire. The government and rebels have accused each other of instigating the attacks.

Ms Macapagal's ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, ordered a military offensive against the MILF last year after the rebels expanded their camps and intensified attacks on government and civilian targets. The military recaptured more than 40 MILF-controlled areas, including their sprawling headquarters in Maguindanao.

The offensive led to the collapse of talks between the Estrada administration and the rebels. The rebels have said they want the camps back as part of a deal for peace talks.

Former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado expressed concern that government negotiators may have already agreed to certain MILF demands, particularly the return of its captured camps including its main base, Camp Abubakar.

Mercado, a senatorial candidate of the opposition, described as "outrageous, if not totally unacceptable" the MILF demand that its captured bases be returned.

Nat'l Security Council

He urged Ms Macapagal to convene the National Security Council to form a national consensus on the conduct of peace talks with communist and Muslim rebels.

"We have to get a consensus of the terms we are willing to give them during the negotiations," Mercado said in a news conference at Club Filipino.

"Unless we have transparency in the peace talks, we may wake up one day with an agreement not acceptable to the people."

As Estrada's defense secretary, Mercado oversaw the conduct of a massive military assault on MILF camps.

Mercado, however, evaded the question of whether Estrada should be invited to the NSC meeting.

The country's ex-presidents are members of the NSC. Estrada is still contesting the Supreme Court's March 2 decision that declared Ms Macapagal the country's legitimate president.

"I wouldn't know (if Estrada should be treated as a former or an incumbent president). That is a problem that has to be resolved by the government.

The Muslim separatist rebellion in Mindanao, homeland of the country's Muslim minority, has killed more than 120,000 people since the early 1970s. Some 700,000 others are also displaced by the conflict that has impeded progress in the country's most resource-rich but one of its poorest regions.

The government refuses to negotiate with Abu Sayyaf, the smaller of the two separatist Muslim groups. Abu Sayyaf gained international attention last year by kidnapping dozens of foreign hostages. Most were released for reportedly large ransoms.

The government has also declared a ceasefire with communist rebels in parts of the main island of Luzon to allow the safe release of an Army officer held captive. The communists have been waging a Marxist rebellion nationwide since the late 1960s. *Reports from AP and Dona Pazzibugan*

Final meeting

TORONTO—Vince Carter scored 24 points as the Toronto Raptors beat Vancouver 102-92, sending the Grizzlies to their ninth straight loss in what might be the final meeting between the Canadian teams. Vancouver owner Michael Heisley has until Monday to inform the National Basketball Association where he wants to move the team. Memphis, Tennessee, is the front-runner, with Louisville, Kentucky, New Orleans and Anaheim, California, also possibilities. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Dayrit makes promise

CITO Dayrit promised yesterday to have the Athletes Commission brought to the Philippine Olympic Committee general assembly in May. "Their officials will sit in the POC general assembly and get first-hand information of what's happening in the local Olympic body as well as the International Olympic Committee," said Dayrit. *June Navarro*

Garma outwits Dimakiling

INTERNATIONAL Master Chito Garma no longer underestimates younger opponents, especially Oliver Dimakiling.

The 34-year-old Garma, playing with utmost caution, pounced on Dimakiling's inaccurate deviation from their Scotch Game to win in just 16 moves and raise his total to 4 points in the tournament organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

"You can never underestimate the talent of the younger players. They can really take you by surprise," said Garma. "I can still recall the time when he (Dimakiling) defeated me in a team tournament in 1999. I was just pushing pawns against him thinking that he was still a raw player. From then on I decided I had to be at my best the next time I play him."

Dimakiling, now 19 and a Sports Management junior, is La Salle's Board 1 player.

Shell tops motocross

MULTITITLED Shell-Yamaha Racing Team made its presence felt anew, posting impressive wins in several categories in the "National Motocross Super Series 2001: A Race of PLDT" before a big weekend crowd in Fort Bonifacio recently.

Pepo Rubi and Karl Poculan carried the fight for Shell-Yamaha with inspiring performances in the expert and open production categories in this 1 2-part series organized by Hartebeest Entertainment Corp. and sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa).

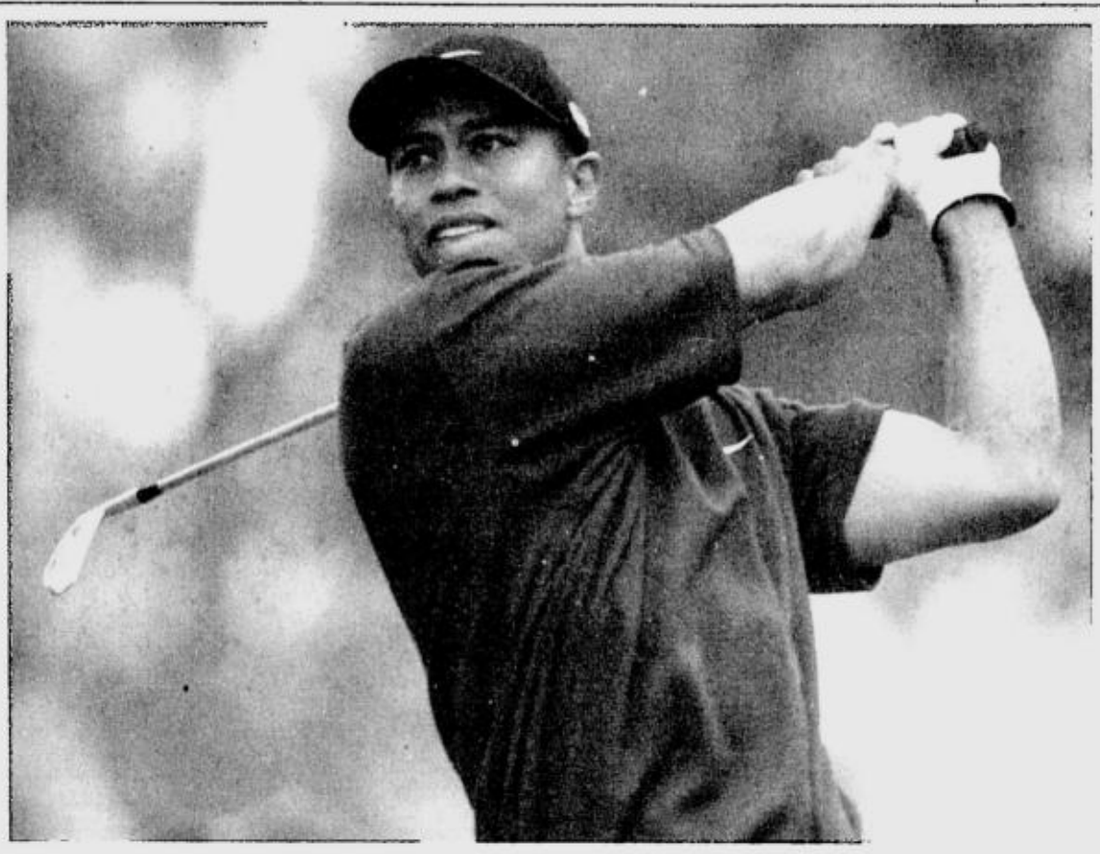
Aguilar wins

CALTEX Revtex KTM Motocross Team's top rider Glenn Aguilar swept the centerpiece Pro 125 and the Pro Open categories in another smashing triumph and pulled away in the Rider of the Year race in the PLDT-MAD Motocross series 2001 Saturday at The Fort.

Mounting his brand-new KTM bike, Aguilar underscored anew his superiority as five-time motocross king by winning the Pro 125 event over Australian champion Atilla Szerda and Jovic Saulog in the second of the 12-leg series organized by Hartebeest Entertainment.

FINISHES 11TH

Delasin earns ₱1.2 million



WOODS: On the brink of winning golf's "fifth major." AP

FILIPINA Dorothy Joy Delasin closed out with a 2-under-par 70 yesterday and landed tied for 11th place in the 2001 Nabisco Championship, the first major of the LPGA season, at the Mission Hills Country Club Dinah Shore course in Rancho Mirage, California.

Delasin, the LPGA Rookie of the Year, won $25,957 (about P1.2 million) and boosted her earnings to $90,892.

With her finish, Delasin, who was chosen 2000 Athlete of the Year by the Philippine Sportswriter Association, was expected to break into the Top 20 from her current position of 28th in the money list.

While the rest of the field struggled to keep pace, Annika Sorenstam cruised to her third straight victory with a 281 total.

The Swede finished 3-shots up on third round leader Rachel Teske, Janice Moodie, Akiko Fukushima, two-time Nabisco Championship winner Dottie Pepper and deposed champion Karrie Webb, all of whom pooled 284.

Delasin, whose group at 287 included Se Ri Pak, Tina Barrett and Laura Davie, also passed compatriot Jenny Rosales ($76,442), who did not play in the event. *Jong Arcano*

DELASIN: Good start.

Jungolf circuit

THE ANNUAL summer circuit of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines gets going tomorrow at Tagaytay Highlands and Riviera in Silang, Cavite.

Merwin Mediana, president of the Jungolf body, announced yesterday that the kiddies division will play at the executive course of Riviera while those in the 11 and above age-group will play at Highlands.

Competitions in Class A (15-17 years old), Class B (13-14) and Class C (11-12) will be in Tagaytay while the Class D (910) and Class E (8 and under) will be at Riviera.

The circuit will have 10 legs, including an out-of-town event at Camp John Hay in Baguio City.

Woods grabs lead; storm halts play

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida — Storms left the leaders only two hours of daylight to play, which is all Tiger Woods needed to take the lead in The Players Championship.

Trailing untested Jerry Kelly by two strokes when the rains finally subsided Sunday (Monday in Manila), Woods caught him with a birdie-eagle start, chipping in from 90 feet (27 meters), and then surged ahead with a 10-foot (three-meter) birdie putt on No. 9 when play was suspended.

The horn sounded as Woods was in the fairway, but he elected to finish the hole. He punched a sand wedge into birdie range and made the putt as darkness descended.

Woods, trying to capture the only prestigious trophy he doesn't own, was at 12 under to lead Kelly and Masters champion Vijay Singh by one stroke.

Bernhard Langer was another stroke back on the 10th hole.

Rain pelted the Stadium Course right after Woods and Kelly went out to the practice range, suspending the final round for 2 hours, 52 minutes and leading to the second straight year of a Monday finish.

By the look of it, the conclusion could be just as thrilling.

A year ago, Hal Sutton built a three-stroke lead before the rains came, returned on Monday and held off Woods to win by one.

The cast of characters is a twice the size this time.

Singh, in great form with his Masters defense just two weeks away, had the lead until missing the ninth fairway and taking bogey. Langer, who hasn't won in four years, was plugging along with three birdies on a soft Sawgrass course and still in position.

"I would have loved to play on because I was feeling comfortable with my swing," Singh said. "But, you can't do anything about it."

Kelly, trying to become the first player to earn his first tour victory in The Players Championship, wasn't backing down, either.

Kelly said he would not be intimidated, that Woods was just another player who had as much pressure _ if not more _ to win the $ 6 million tournament. And he lived up to those words.

Then again, Tiger lived up to his reputation.

When the gallery returned from the rain delay and crammed into the amphitheater around the first tee, it sounded like the start of a heavyweight fight.

Woods landed the first punch. *AP*

Garcia, Onlenco 'Eagle' champions

PAULO Garcia and Ron Onlenco led the winners on the course even as Tess Langomez and Benjie Oca drove home with brand-new Opel cars in Sunday's inaugural Eagle Ridge Invitational member-guest tournament.

Garcia and Onlenco combined for a net 300 to win by seven strokes over Frederic Garcia and Jenz Teeson. Jason Sprankle and John Cope were a far third at 319.

The Class B crown was won by Rudy Boquiron and Manolo Agojo, Class C went to Elvis Medalla and Claro Maranan while the ladies title was captured by Karen Kime and Pauline Castro.

Langomez scored a hole-in-one while Oca got very lucky during a raffle in winning an Opel Tigra donated by Golforce and an Opel Astra Wagon through GM Autoworld Makati in the event that lured 180 teams.

Sta. Lucia EVP Vicente Santos and Winnie Gob, project director of the country's biggest golf complex, awarded the prizes to the winners.

Langomez is the first woman in recent years to have own a car for a hole-in-one feat. She made the spectacular shot on the par-3 seventh hole of the Faldo course.

The major sponsors for the tournament were Outback Steakhouse, CGU Insurance, Pisanti, Pilipinas Golf and Unirock, Corp. The other sponsors are Readycon Trading & Construction Corp., Turf Co., Exan Builders, Sta. Lucia Readymix & Construction Corp., RCBC, DC Star Gases, Imus Party Haus, Gerry's Buko Juice, Handyworks Manpower Services, Corp., Prime Deli, Inc. and Erisson Enterprises.

Montaña battles Osaka in PBL today

GAMES TODAY
(Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Hapee vs Ana Freezer
5:30 p.m.—Osaka vs Montaña Jewels

BY DENNIS U. EROA

REJUVENATED Montaña Pawnshop clashes with Osaka Iridology today while Ana Freezer Specialist challenges Hapee Toothpaste in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

This will be the second playing day of the league after Shark ripped Welcoat apart, 75-62, in last Saturday's explosive opener.

In a determined bid to finally annex its first-ever title, Montaña added former Welcoat power rebounder Francis Zamora, MBA veteran John Lim and shot-blocking Jay-Ar Estrada.

The presence of the 6-foot-5 Zamora boosted Montaña's middle, assuring the Jewels of their own version of the Triple Towers. Gillbert Lao and Mel Latoreno, both 6-foot-5, are Montaña's other big men.

The Montaña-Osaka tussle is set at 5:30 p.m. Ana meets Hapee at 3:30 p.m.

Dominic Uy, Rendell de la Rea, Jessie Cabanayan and Omar Asmad are Osaka's new recruits. Alvin Castro, Ronald Cuan, Willy Wilson, Adonis Sta. Maria and Bernzon Franco remain with the Iridologists.

With pivotman Ruel Buenaventura a doubtful starter, Ana will find the going rough against Hapee, which will parade ex-MBA dribblers Allan Salangsang, Julius Binuya and Glenn Yuson.

"Ruel is unsure to play due to some problems," confirmed Ana skipper Rey Mendez. "Management is still negotiating with the Red Bull management."

The 6-foot-6 Buenaventura is still under contract with Red Bull and Ana is hoping to get the former UE standout on loan.

Without Buenaventura, Ana will have to rely on former NU standout Ariel de Castro, Leo Vilar, and Roland Pascual in the perimeter. Ronald Tubid, Dondon Mendoza and Mendez will provide firepower.

"We have flexibility this time. The presence of Zamora is a big plus," said Montaña mentor Leo Isaac. Orly Torrente is starting pointguard for the Jewels, who placed third in the Challenge Cup won by Shark.

SPORTSWATCH

RP 5 trips Gems

DUMAGUETE CITY—Coach Boyzie Zamar found a way to use his entire roster as the Philippine men's team repeated over the Cebu Gems, 87-77, Sunday night in its final tune-up game at the Lamberto Mecias Sports Center here. Given 14 stalwarts from the Metropolitan Basketball Association, Zamar had to distribute playing time and make sure that everybody was ready to plunge into action in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association championship set April 2-9 in Manila. *Roy Luarca*

Strickland arrives

EARL Strickland, pride of the USA, arrived yesterday to fulfill his date with Efren Bata Reyes in the San Miguel Beer's US$20,000 (1 million) "The Color of Money, Part II." The five-time US Open champion flew in from Tokyo after competing in the Japan Open where he finished ninth. Puyat Sports and Viva Vintage TV will present the tournament on March 29 and March 31.

Arizona nips Illinois

SAN ANTONIO—They've put the distractions behind and lived up to their preseason No. 1 status for months. Now Arizona is headed to the Final Four of the NCAA college basketball championship tournament. Gilbert Arenas scored 18 of his 21 points in the first half and the Wildcats gave Illinois as much of a pounding as they took, carrying Arizona and coach Lute Olson into the Final Four with an 87-81 victory in the Midwest Regional final Sunday. The Wildcats, 19-2 since beginning the season 8-5, earned a trip to Minneapolis for a national semifinal game against defending champion Michigan State on Saturday. The Spartans beat Temple 69-62 Sunday to win the South Regional. Arizona (27-7) upheld the honor of the Pac-10, which saw Stanford and Southern Cal get bumped in regional finals Saturday. The Wildcats are the conference's first team to make the Final Four since 1998, when Stanford did it. *AP*

NBA RESULTS

Milwaukee 105, Atlanta 98; Boston 102, Chicago 98; Minnesota 105, New Jersey 91; LA Lakers 84, Sacramento 72; Miami 88, San Antonio 83; Orlando 84, Indiana 82; Toronto 102, Vancouver 92. *AFP*

Jun B summons Tan, Cariaso

GAMES TOMORROW *(PhilSports)*
5:15 p.m.—Mobiline vs Alaska
7:30 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Shell
Games Friday
(PhilSports Arena)
5:15 p.m.—Purefoods vs Barangay Ginebra
7:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs San Miguel
GAMES SUNDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
4:15 p.m.—Alaska vs Pop Cola
6:30 p.m.—Shell vs Mobiline

PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino ordered Tanduay team owner Bong Tan and Rhummaster Jeffrey Cariaso to explain their outrage during Sunday's game between Tanduay and Pop Cola. Pop Cola won, 82-75.

Tan reportedly shattered the glass door leading to the dugout of the Araneta Coliseum while Cariaso was ejected for his verbal outburst against referee Luisito Cruz to earn two successive technicals.

Tan got a technical for stepping onto the court.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: 2001 NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament, Mid-east Regional Final at 9 a.m., West Regional Final at 11 a.m. on ESPN
CNBL Final #4 at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
NBA - Philadelphia 76ers vs Phoenix Suns at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN
TENNIS: WTA Evert Cup, Finals at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
Ericsson Open, Early Round Coverage Day #5 at 8:30 p.m. (r), Day #6 tomorrow at 2 a.m. on ESPN
GOLF: PGA - The Players Championship, Second Round at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
BOXING: Sugar Ray's Hit Parade 1974 World Heavyweight Title Bout at 7:30 p.m: (r) on ESPN
WRESTLING: WCW Worldwide at 9:30 p.m. on Star Sports
TRACK AND FIELD: NCAA Div.1 Indoor Track and Field, Men's & Women's Finals tomorrow at 12:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN
IAAF Indoor Grand Prix at 11 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
MOTOR SPORTS: International Motorsport News 2001 at 7 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
Motorsport Asia at 8 a.m. (r) on ESPN

Camp accepts cagerettes

FEMALE basketball players will be given the chance to leart the sport and enhance their skills further through rigid training under the guidance of professional coaches and some of the game's superstars in the Nike Be Ballcamp.

The latest training techniques from the United States will be applied in this edition of the Nike Be Ballcamp set on April 23 to May 2 at the RFM Sports Center in Mandaluyong City.

In the United States, women's basketball has gotten a lift the past several years because of the formation of the WNBA. In the Philippines, the Philippine Basketball League has done its share through the WPBL held every summer.

"It is the hope of the Nike Be Ballcamp to develop female players who will later play for school teams in the NCRAA or WNCAA and the national team in the future," said Nike Phils. Sports marketing manager Auty Villarama.

Registration for the Nike Be Ballcamp is held every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at the Nike Stadium Building A of the Megamall in Mandaluyong City. Registration is from 1 to 8 p.m. Inquiries may be coursed through the Grand Slam Sports Office at tels. 643-31-54 or 747-1335.

TENNIS WHIZ AP

Andy Roddick cries in jubilation after upsetting Pete Sampras, 7-6 (7-2), 6-3, in yesterday's third round of the Ericsson Open in Key Biscayne, Florida. In women's play, No. 1 Martina Hingis, No. 2 Lindsay Davenport, No. 3 Venus Williams, No. 4 Jennifer Capriati and No. 5 Venus Williams advanced to the next round with ease. Only Serena Williams struggled, needing a comeback to beat 19-year-old Iroda Tulyaganova, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Ucap derby begins tonight

THE "8th Ucap/Arnis Master 6-Cock Derby," to be hosted by popular sportsman-jeweller Raymond Velayo, fires off at 6 tonight at the Mandaluyong Coliseum bannering more than 45 fights. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc.

Velayo, fresh from ruling the 7th Ucap Derby last Thursday, invited big time cockers and breeders from the United Cockers Association of the Philippines and National Cockers Association in another slambang confrontation for the title.

Set today is the elimination round (2-cock) while the championship round (4-cock) is slated on March 29.

To follow immediately is the "Sir Richard Sa Ucap 4-Cock Derby" on March 31. Host is upcoming derbyist Richard Lim.

The 9th Ucap/Sagupaan Winning Line/Starwars Sagupaan 6-Cock Derby, hosted by Patrick Antonio and Tony Lintonjua, is set on April 3 and 5.

Mandaluyong Coliseum also presents the "Capitan 5-Cock Derby" on April 7 with partners John Capinpin and James Uy as hosts.

Macapendeg ousts Eddun

ZAMBOANGA—Hamza Macapendeg of Cotabato City ousted Al Mahdi Eddun, 8-1, and Fil Caroro, 6-1, 6-0, to barge into the finals of the boys' 14-under division Saturday of the rain-marred 2001 Milo Junio Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop here.

Macapendeg tangles with Michael Mesa of Davao City, who downed Roel Damian, 2-6, 7-5, 7-5.

Macapendeg and Mesa stayed on course for another titular showdown in the boys' 16-under class following victories over Banoy Silva, 8-2, and Fahd Salip, 8-7, respectively in the Milo netfest organized by the CTW and supported by Adidas.

In Los Baños, Laguna, Chase Tinio ousted veteran Jonathan Molina, 6-2, 6-4, in the opening round of the boys' 18 years and under of the Juntaphil-Los Baños age-group tennis championships.

Tinio was joined in the next round by Joseph Arcilla, Alfred Casareo and Jim Rellona.

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ERICSSON

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

4 killed, 42 injured in two city crashes A18

2 aliens slain

Indian shot, Japanese pushed to death

BY ALCUIN PAPA

TWO FOREIGNERS were murdered over the weekend in separate incidents in Pasay and Makati City.

Japanese Koichi Kaneko, 70, a businessman staying at Room 2005 of the EGI Mall at the corner of Buendia and Taft Avenues, was pushed out of his room on the 20th floor on Sunday.

Kaneko landed on the 7th floor of the building where he was discovered by roving security guards at about 10:45 a.m. He was also found with a black leather belt strapped around his body and forearms.

No other marks or wounds were found on Kaneko, leading investigators to presume he was alive when he was pushed out of his room. Investigators also found Kaneko's room in disarray but have yet to determine whether any cash or valuables were lost.

The belt bag found on Kaneko contained some cash and his passport. He was last seen at about 12:30 a.m. on Sunday when he arrived at the building.

Police, who have yet to establish a motive, have already taken the statement of his Filipino girlfriend, Erwina Ramirez, 26, of Madrigal Compound, Quirino Avenue, Las Piñas.

Police learned Ramirez was not in Kaneko's room when the incident happened. Ramirez was said to have gone to Japan to work and had a relationship with Kaneko, who owned a few entertainment bars.

Investigators are now pursuing a suspect, but refused to release any more details.

Also on Sunday, Singh Gursewak, 32, of 353 Prudencio Street, Sampaloc, Manila, was going around Barangay Pembo in Makati to collect money from residents who owe him.

As Gursewak stood in front of Dan's Barbershop at about 11 a.m., an unidentified suspect approached him, pulled out a gun and fired a single shot, said SPO4 Leonardo Timtiman of the Makati City Police Homicide Section. Gursewak died on the spot from a gunshot wound to the head.

Police believed robbery was the motive behind the killing. Investigators were still trying to determine how much money was stolen from Gursewak.

Wazzzzup?

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Cowboy Cafe, Brgy Almanza, Las Piñas	GOALKEYS BROWNIE	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 801.7644
Cowboy Cafe, 1190 Arquiza St., Malate	MUSIC CIRCUIT STAYTUNED/CITYBORN	NO ENTRANCE FEE 525.1474/525.4269
Cowboy Cafe, 451 Remedios St., Malate	SERSIDE PUZZLES	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 521.8143
Cowboy Cafe, Novaliches Q.C.	HOMOSAPIENS H I M I G	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 936.9757
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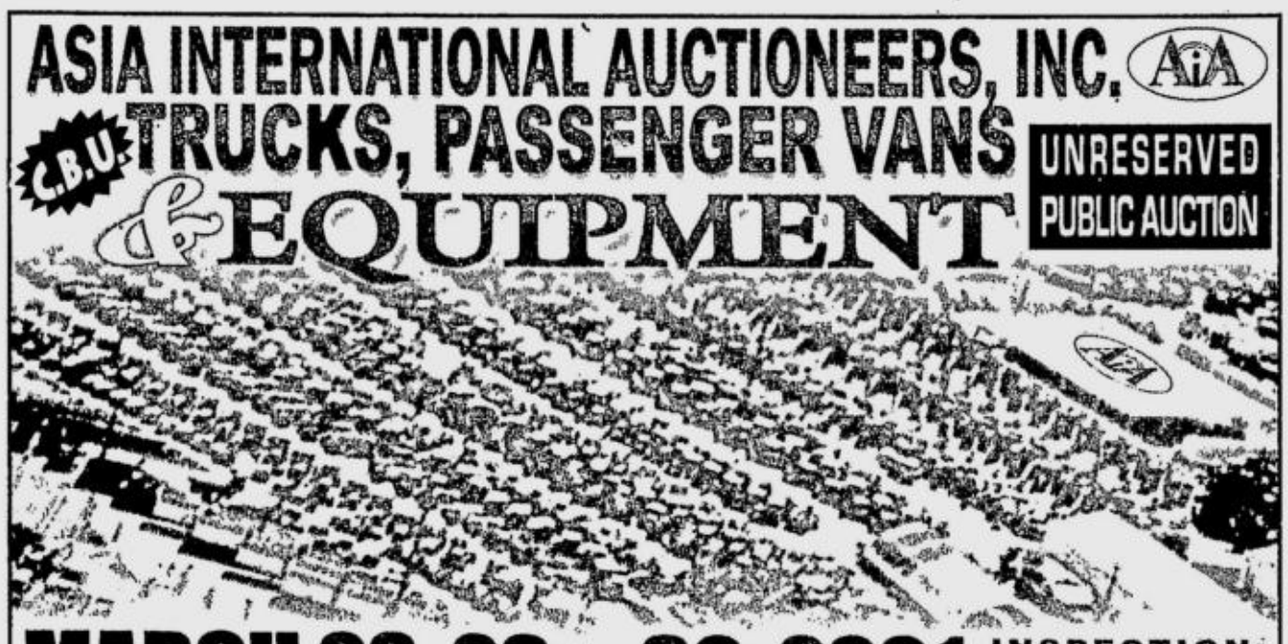

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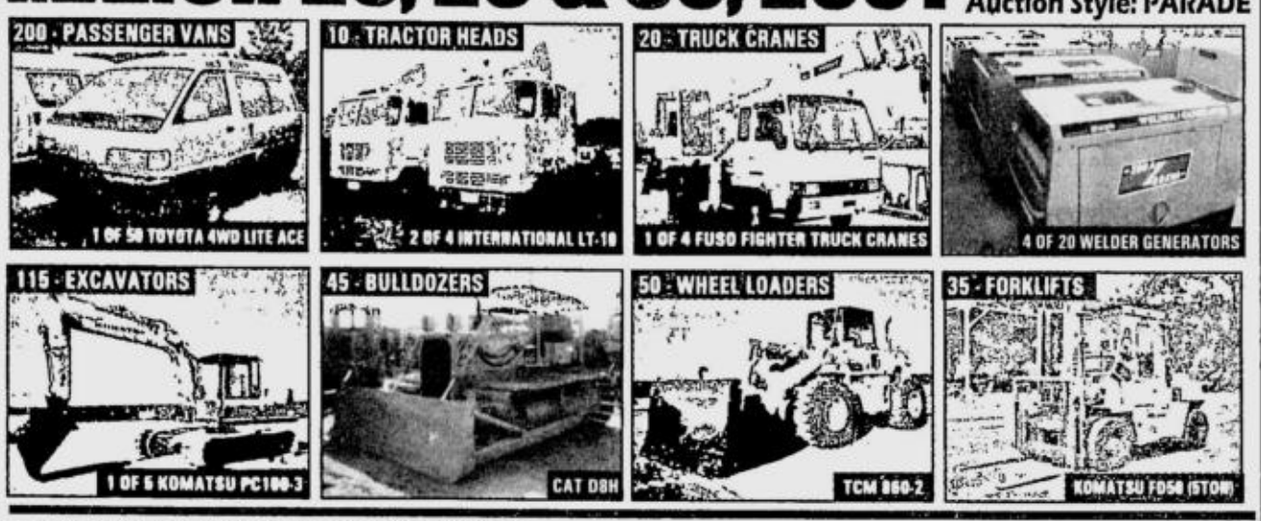

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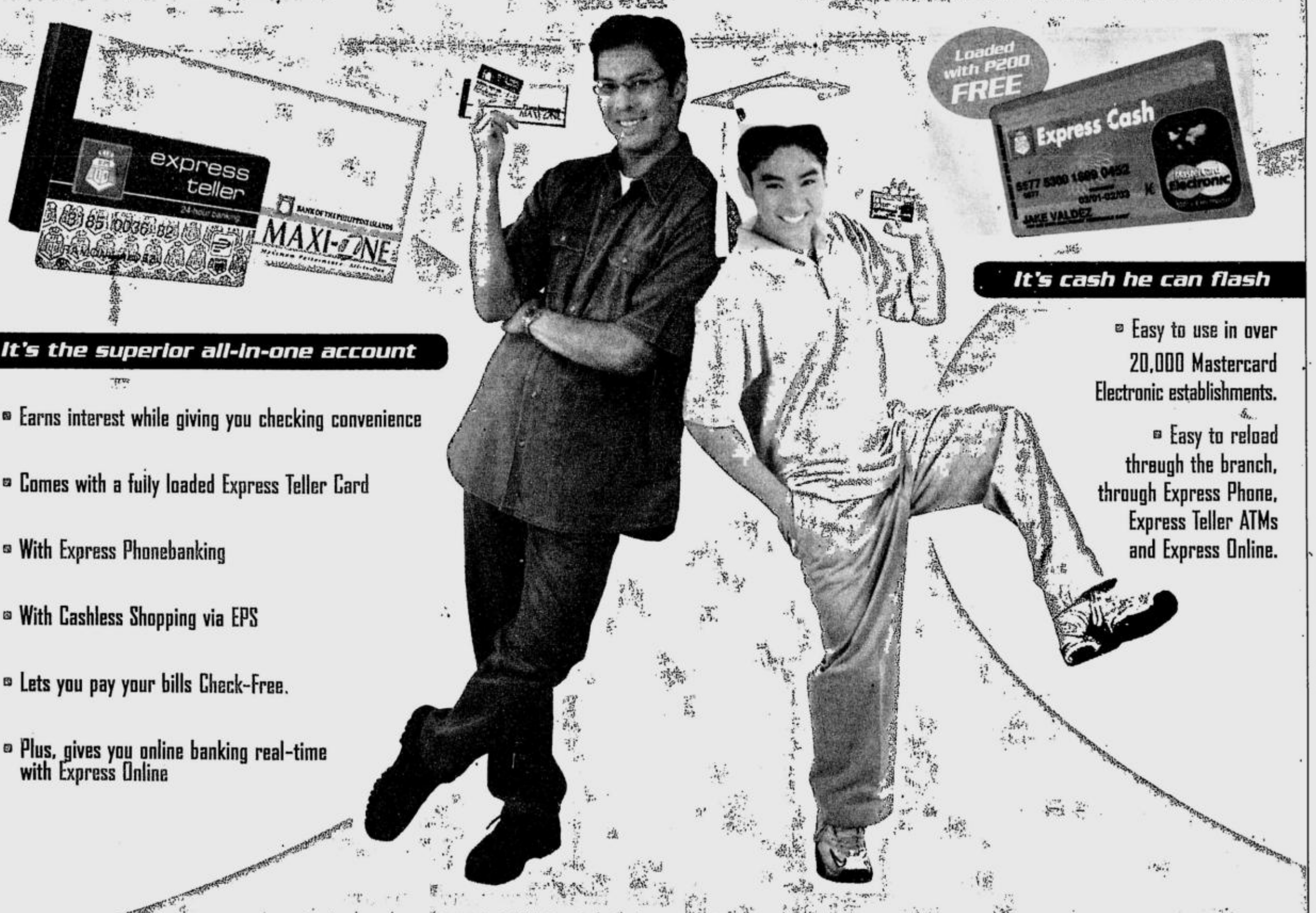

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It's porno–Roces

DONNA S. CUETO

THE newly appointed chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board yesterday claimed the movie "Live Show" was pornography.

Dr. Alejandro Roces, appointed on Friday, said he supported the move of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to ban the film.

Shortly after he took his oath yesterday, Roces, 76, held a press conference where he claimed that the controversial film which drew the acclaim of movie critics in Berlin, was a shame to Filipinos.

Roces said he would make sure that Filipino movies to be shown in the country would be those which would serve as "instrument(s) of nation building."

"We are just going to implement the law," he said.

"I saw 'Live Show' yesterday. I was literally shocked. I'm not a prude. I've been all over the world. It's pornography," Roces stressed.

"If you see 'Live Show' and it's being shown abroad, you'll be ashamed of being a Filipino," he added.

Roces said he would seek an amendment of the law, so directors would have to secure a "professional license to direct."

"I will seek an amendment of this. To be a director, you have to have a professional license to direct," he said.

"And one of the conditions of that license—and this is what I am going to propose—no pornography," he said.

Roces said he would also push for the amendment of the law so that pornography would be made a "criminal offense."

He urged movie producers to make films about People Power 2, the life and death of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., and other subjects extolling the virtues of Filipinos.

While he claimed that he would just implement the law, and would not to try to make his own rules, Roces said that he would try to revise the MTRCB rules if they need revising, hinting that he was favoring censorship.

"First of all, I will study the rules very, very well, whether it is all right as it is or whether it should be (amended). I don't know how they were able to distort this and say that our job is just to classify for children or for adults," he said.

While he claimed too that Live Show was X-rated or pornographic, he later admitted that the MTRCB had rated it "for adults only."

He kept on citing the effect of "Live Show" on a man who raped a girl after seeing the movie, as what had been reported in the papers.

He said he was shocked not only with the scenes in "Live Show," but with its dialogue as well.

But basically, Roces claimed he would just follow the law.

'Live Show' sizzles

BY JEROME ANING

MOVIE directors, producers, and bold stars yesterday marched to the Don Chino Roces Bridge near Malacañang to protest the banning of the sex film "Toro: Live Show" from showing in movie houses by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Wearing black band on their hats and around their arms, the protesters came from the Coalition of Filipino Film and Television Workers, which included the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, Directors Guild of the Philippines, the Kapisanan ng mga Direktor ng Pelikulang Pilipino, among other groups.

"Live Show" has been hailed in 13 international film festivals and even lauded by the head of the International Catholic Organization for Cinema "for its very strong social concerns."

Film critics have said the movie, which premiered last year in the Berlin Film Festival and has been shown in other foreign venues, only reflects the reality of Manila's thriving flesh trade brought on by extreme poverty.

The movie people were joined by several groups, including left-leaning organizations headed by the Bayan Muna and Sanlakas, as well as pro-Estrada factions led by the People's Unity Movement Philippines.

Police said the demonstrators swelled to about 1,000 strong as hundreds of residents in the area, students, workers and commuters in the University Belt flocked to the site of protest to ogle at sexy actress Klaudia Koronel and Hazel Espinosa, who starred in the sizzling sex flick directed by Jose Javier Reyes.

Reyes and former Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) chair Nicanor Tiongson, who quit the post last week after he refused to ban the controversial movie, spearhead the tirades against the Macapagal administration and the Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

They have accused the church and government of violating freedom of expression by banning the film.

But bent on beating the ban, a queue of men and college students in Manila's university district on Recto Street have flocked to theaters on the street to watch the final showing of "Live Show," a film about young men and women who fornicate for pay before a live audience.

A sideshow to "Live Show" came from 10 young men clad only in briefs and the words "Live Show" painted on their backs. They danced around the statue of Chino Roces, while a Sanlakas contingent presented a group of young people whose mouths and eyes were plastered with black tapes labeled "censorship."

Actors Richard Gomez, Jude Estrada, and Gardo Versoza, who became popular through movies featuring him in explicit sex scenes, were also in the rally and said they thought "Live Show" was not obscene nor pornographic. They also called for the revision of censorship standards.

4 killed, 42 injured in two city crashes

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA AND JEROME ANING

A WEEK after a wayward oil truck slammed into a fisherman's wharf in Parañaque killing 14 people, two road accidents involving a bus and a cab claimed 4 more lives yesterday in Caloocan City and Manila.

Three women and a man were killed while 42 others, including a year-old girl, were injured when a loaded passenger bus skidded off a bridge and fell on shanties in Caloocan City, while a passenger cab lost its breaks and plowed through pedestrians in Manila.

In Caloocan City, Jocelyn Estorninos, 17, and Verdi Estarinos, 27, were killed while 41 were injured when a Lady Swan transit bus (PWR-236) fell off Tullahan bridge on the North Expressway and landed on squatters' huts at about 8:45 a.m., said Orly Lanosa of the Philippine National Construction Company.

Estarinos of Project 4, Quezon City, was pinned under the bus and died instantly, Lanosa said.

Jocelyn Estorninos was with Lilia Valles, 38, when the bus hit their shanty, critically injuring both. Estorninos died a few hours later.

The 41 victims were taken to the Fatima Medical Center and Montefalco Hospital in Valenzuela, and Manila Central University Hospital in Caloocan.

Some of the 41 injured in the bus accident were Nilo Rigodon and wife Helen, William Berganio, Julien Sarosa, Gerry Villanueva, Myrna and Henry Samucho, Jober Granados, Ophelia Espinar and Lorly Mandap.

Apolonio Roldan, who suffered minor injuries, was taken to Fatima Hospital.

According to the Caloocan Police Traffic Enforcement Group, Lady Swan bus driver Bernardino Ordonez and conductor Nexy Apatad were on their way to Novaliches with about 60 passengers when a tanker truck allegedly emerged in their path on Tullahan Bridge.

The driver was forced to swerve to its right, then rammed through the concrete railing of the bridge and fell on the shanties, Lanosa said.

The bus fell on its right side and directly smashed into Estorninos's house.

In Manila, Nenita Edna Ancheta, 65, and her daughter-in-law Leony Ramos, 36, were killed when a taxi lost its brakes and hit the pedestrians as they were crossing a street in Sampaloc, Manila Sunday night, said Supt. Roberto dela Rosa, commander of the Western Traffic Enforcement Office.

Ramos' year-old daughter survived the accident but is still in critical condition at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital in Sampaloc, police said.

SPO4 Wilfredo Estomaquio said the accident took place about 11 p.m., while Ramos and Ancheta, both residents of Sobriedad Street, Sampaloc, were crossing Espana and Maceda streets near the Trabajo market.

When the pedestrians reached the middle of the street, a southbound Chris John Transport taxi (PYB-293) driven by Gerry Pagampang, 36, of Mendez Street, Baesa, Quezon City, slammed into the victims when the vehicle reportedly lost its breaks.

The force of the impact threw the baby girl up and landed on the cab's windshield. Her mother and grandmother were hit and run over.

Pagampang's passengers, Carlo Candero and Christopher Azarcon, both 18, of Sto. Nino, Gapan, Nueva Ecija, suffered scratches and bruises.

The driver took the victims to the hospital and later surrendered to traffic policemen.

He was charged with reckless imprudence resulting in double homicide and seriously physical injuries.

KIBITZERS flock to Tulyahan Bridge on North Expressway, where two people were killed and 42 injured after a bus fell off the bridge and landed on squatter shanties.

PHOTOS/EDWIN BACASMAS

Arroyo's peace overtures not practical

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's call on the new graduates of the Philippine Military Academy to "give peace a chance" sounds wonderful, but will it work with the Moro rebels?

The New People's Army wants peace as much as the government. Many of its members are tired of fighting for a cause that has become passé with the fall of communist movements in many parts of the world. Smoking the peace pipe with them is not a problem.

But what about the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which wants to keep on fighting despite the defeat it suffered during the unlamented Estrada regime?

* * *

The MILF wants to get back Camp Abubakar, its headquarters, and a score of satellite camps that fell to government hands last year.

Will Ms Arroyo, in a gesture of genuine offer of peace, give back these captured camps to the Moros?

If she does, she will, of course, win the "goodwill" of the MILF. But her gesture will be mistaken for weakness. Oh, the Moros would love to see a sign of weakness in their enemy! Like predators, they take advantage of the weakness of their prey.

* * *

Ms Arroyo would alienate many soldiers who fought hard to capture Camp Abubakar and the MILF's other satellite camps. The capture of the rebel camps took a big toll on government troops. Those who fought those battles saw many of their comrades killed or wounded.

But what the President should fear more is alienating the Christian population in Mindanao. Despite what the so-called peace advocates claim, Mindanao Christians, who outnumber the Muslims 10 to 1, cheered Erap when he ordered an all-out war against the MILF.

Christians were already fed up with the atrocities committed by Moro rebels against unarmed Christian civilians in Mindanao. The Moros have been involved in ambuscades of civilians, kidnappings for ransom, highway robberies and rape.

* * *

Lest I be accused of inciting a ethnic war, I am just making an observation on what I gathered in my visit to Mindanao over the weekend.

The reason Erap is still very popular among the people in Mindanao is that he was able to "tame" the Moros, at least for the time being.

For example, in the town of Tarragona, Davao Oriental, the MILF rebels have stopped robbing buses going to and from Davao City. Tarragona, a few kilometers from the capital Mati, has a small Muslim population.

But being a minority group did not prevent them from holding sway in the town and neighboring areas. The Tarragona rebels were feared by the Christians. Until Erap ordered an all-out war against the MILF. The highway robberies are gone. So are the checkpoints that Moro rebels set up.

* * *

"Si Erap lang ang nakapagpaamo ng mga Muslim na rebelde (It was only Erap who tamed the Muslim rebels)," a Davaoweño told me.

Because of it, he said, many people are voting for the majority of Erap's candidates of the Puwersa ng Masa.

It's not only in Davao City and the four Davao provinces (the newly formed province is the Compostela Valley). In nearby Cotabato, Puwersa ng Masa senatorial candidates are welcomed like heroes on the campaign trail.

Ms Macapagal and her political strategists will have to work doubly hard to win Mindanao voters.

* * *

Military and police checkpoints have sprouted up in many areas, especially in Mindanao, to flush out people who carry firearms. Carrying of guns is banned during the election period.

Superiors of military and policemen who man these checkpoints should advise their men against being arrogant toward civilians.

Civilians don't mind the inconvenience of being ordered to alight from buses or jeepneys at checkpoints. In fact, they appreciate the safety measures. But they don't like being shouted at or pushed around by the soldiers and cops.

* * *

The new management of the controversial Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. or Pagcor is in the midst of a campaign to win the approval of the citizenry.

For starters, it has launched the building en masse of public toilets starting in Metro Manila.

Efraim Genuino, Pagcor chair, says the government firm will initially build 10 public toilets in strategic places in the metropolis. Each public toilet will cost P500,000.

* * *

To maintain the Pagcor public toilet, a fee will be charged for its use. Children of policemen will be assigned to collect the fees to augment their fathers' income, Genuino says.

He has coordinated with the Philippine National Police and the Department of Tourism on the toilet-building project.

Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon is in the midst of a cleanliness campaign to attract more tourists to our shores. Gordon says the No. 1 pet peeve of a tourist is the lack of facilities for hygiene in a country he's visiting. Singapore is an example where clean public toilets are a few meters apart.

Before the end of this year, Genuino says he shall have built 50 toilets in strategic areas in Metro Manila. The next target is the provinces, he says.

Genuino needs support from the citizenry. The Philippines is notorious for the ugly sight of people urinating in public places.

Near-clash in anti-Marquez rally

BY ACUIN PAPA

PARANAQUE City residents who rallied to denounce the alleged failure of Mayor Joey Marquez to solve the city's garbage problem nearly clashed with supporters of the mayor yesterday morning.

Both sides swapped charges with protesters claiming members of the pro-Marquez group threw water bottles at them.

No one was reported injured.

"They (Marquez group) were provoking us. But we are a non-violent group and we are not after personalities but issues here," said Wilson Loy, a convenor of the "Gising Parañaque Movement."

Around 3,000 members of the group led by Loy and convenors Leonardo De Vera and Jasmin Ramos started marching at around 7:30 a.m. from the San Dionisio Plaza to the Himlayang Palanyag, which they alleged was being used as a "secret dumpsite" for the city's trash.

After a short program, the marchers proceeded to the Parañaque City Hall where they sought an audience with Marquez. However, they were not allowed to enter the grounds of the city hall and were instead confronted by the mayor's supporters.

Loy denounced the denial of their entry, saying this was tantamount to a violation of their constitutional rights.

"We are fed up with the garbage situation in the city. There is uncollected garbage in the streets. If you look at Parañaque now, it's really filthy compared to the other nearby cities. In fact, the local government has made a cemetery into a garbage dump," Loy, referring to the Himlayan Palanyag, explained.

Ramos added that Marquez had promised to address the garbage problem during his six years as mayor but failed.

"Parañaque was beautiful before. Now it's going down the drain. It's so dirty. Marquez has never addressed the garbage problem in the city. Every time we tried to talk to him he would ignore us or be told he was out."

She added that when Marquez's camp got wind of their protest action, he immediately had the garbage site cleaned, an operation which, she said, took four days. "If he can clean it up in four days, why didn't he do it during his six years."

Loy said that the garbage at the cemetery was just transferred to an area near the construction of the new SM Mall along Sucat Road.

Both stressed that they are not allied with any of the political rivals of Marquez in this coming elections.

"We are not endorsing any of the candidates, absolutely not. We are not going to support any politician for this coming elections. If it was another politician, we would rally too," they said.

The group said that all they wanted was "good governance." We are sick and tired. We all want to beautify the city, that's the only issue. And we want good governance. We are a watchdog and we want honest government and transparency," Loy concluded.

Mayor Marquez could not be contacted for comment until late yesterday.

Julie Yap's son hogtied, robbed of car, P.4M

AGNES E. DONATO

A SON of TV talk show host Julie Yap-Daza was yesterday hog-tied by an intruder who single-handedly robbed his gasoline station and fled with his car and P400,000 in Antipolo City.

Businessman Peter Michael Daza, 34, of Villa Ortigas 2 in Quezon City, described the still unidentified suspect as about 5'9" in height, slim, dark, with a hoarse voice.

Daza, owner of the Flying V gasoline station at Barangay Masinag, Antipolo, said his secretary, Melinda Yba, called up and informed him at about 8 a.m. that a certain Eric Mendoza had arrived to make some repairs on the roof of the gas station.

Daza said he did not know of any arrangement with a maintenance man, but his wife confirmed that there were indeed leaks on the roof and some minor problems with the electrical installation so he allowed Mendoza to proceed.

To Daza's surprise, Yba entered his private office 30 minutes later, with Mendoza poking a fan knife on her throat. Mendoza also reportedly pointed a handgun at Daza while warning the secretary not to scream for help. He threatened to kill them both.

The suspect then ordered Daza to get the nylon rope from the former's bag and tie Yba to a chair. Daza was also instructed to open the vault where he had been keeping some P400,000 in earnings.

While Daza was tossing the money bundles to Mendoza, the victim accidentally nudged the handgun and realized, when it fell, that it was a toy.

Despite this discovery, Daza said he did not attempt to fight back because he thought the robber would cut him with the knife.

Mendoza then tied Daza's hands behind his back, after which the suspect took the car keys from the victim's pocket and drove away with his light green Mitsubishi L-300 van.

After Daza and Yba were able to free themselves, the gas station owner tried to follow the suspect using another car, to no avail.

Daza said the robbery could be an "inside job," as there were only a few people who knew about the vault where the money was kept and the repairs to be done on the gasoline station.

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3 DOLBY SURROUND	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY
4 DOLBY DIGITAL	THE GIFT
5 DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6 DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
7 DOLBY DIGITAL	WEDDING PLANNER
8 DOLBY SURROUND	BAIT
9 DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
10 DOLBY SURROUND	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY
11 DOLBY SURROUND	TOO MUCH FLESH
12 DOLBY SURROUND	PANABLA

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1 DOLBY DIGITAL	THE GIFT
2 DOLBY DIGITAL	CHOCOLAT
3 DOLBY SURROUND	CROUCHING TIGER
4 DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
5 DOLBY DIGITAL	QUILLS
6 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
7 DOLBY SURROUND	TOO MUCH FLESH
8 DOLBY SURROUND	BAIT
9 DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
10 DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
11 DOLBY SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
12 DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

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1 ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
2 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

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1 DOLBY DIGITAL	WEDDING PLANNER
2 DOLBY SURROUND	QUILLS
3 DOLBY DIGITAL	THE GIFT
4 DTS	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
5 DOLBY SURROUND	BAIT
6 DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
7 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9 DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10 DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1 DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2 DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4 DOLBY SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
5 DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
6 DOLBY SURROUND	QUILLS
7 DTS	BAIT
8 DOLBY DIGITAL	THE GIFT
9 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HANNIBAL
10 DOLBY SURROUND	TOO MUCH FLESH
11 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
12 DOLBY SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY

SM SOUTHMALL 8066888 • 8066782

1 ULTRA SURROUND	QUILLS
2 ULTRA SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
3 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	BAIT
4 ULTRA SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
5 ULTRA SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
6 ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
7 ULTRA SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
8 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	THE GIFT
9 ULTRA SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
10 ULTRA SURROUND	PANABLA

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1 ULTRA SURROUND	THE GIFT
2 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PANABLA
4 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

SM CEBU 2313876

1 DOLBY SURROUND	ALMOST FAMOUS
2 ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
3 ULTRA SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
4 ULTRA SURROUND	BLONDIE
5 ULTRA SURROUND	SNATCH
6 ULTRA SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
7 DOLBY SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP

SM ILOILO 3209422

1 ULTRA SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
2 ULTRA SURROUND	SNATCH
3 ULTRA SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
4 ULTRA SURROUND	TUHOG
5 ULTRA SURROUND	HANNIBAL
6 ULTRA SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
7 ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8 ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED

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1 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	WEDDING PLANNER
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3 DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
4 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
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2 THE GIFT	2 BAIT in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND	6 WEDDING PLANNER in DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND	2 THE GIFT in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND	2 WEDDING PLANNER in DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 OOOPS, TEKA LANG...	3 THE GIFT THX in DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND	7 CHOCOLAT in DTS DIGITAL SOUND	3 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND	3 BAIT in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 BAIT	4 CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON in DTS DIGITAL SOUND	Art Film	MARCH 16,17,23,24 4 GARY V. BY REQUEST 2 Onstage	4 CHOCOLAT in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
				5 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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MOVIE GUIDE

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8 (DDS)	DRACULA 2000
9 (SDDS)	OOOPS TEKA LANG
10 (DTS)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

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4	
5	
6 (DTS)	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Golden Pearl THX

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3	PANABLA

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3	THE GIFT
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3	OOOPS TEKA LANG
4	
5	
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8	RESERVE

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3	

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8	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY

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1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Dilson
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Mandaluyong
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3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

Prima
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1	
3	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

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2	THE GIFT
3	PANABLA
4	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
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3	PANABLA
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Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

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2	PANABLA
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
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4	DUDE

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Lianas MovieCity
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1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	PANABLA

Olivarez Los Baños
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1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	PURPLE STORM

Olivarez Tagaytay
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1	NURSE BETTY
2	OOOPS TEKA LANG
3	BLONDIE

Morales Cinema
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3	PURPLE STORM

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Solar releases Jacky Woo's action flick

LOCAL audiences are in for a big surprise with Solar Films' release of the international film, "Total Aikido."

Starring Jacky Woo, Japan's master of martial arts, the movie is ably supported by Filipino actors and actresses headed by John Regala and Aya Medel.

Filled with hardhitting encounters, massive gunplays, death-defying stunts and steamy scenes, it sets an entirely new trend in the action genre.

"This is not the ordinary martial arts film we used to see in the past," says veteran filmmaker Jerry Tirazona. "It's traditionally Asian and yet, its appeal is very universal."

Tirazona notes Woo is a natural actor. "With his unique fighting style as the movie's main attraction, he'll easily become Asia's action star to watch in the new decade.

With a sequel already being shot in the southern part of the country, "Total Aikido" introduces Jacky's own martial arts style called dance shoot.

WOO with local screen siren Aya Medel in "Total Aikido."

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2 OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3 WOMAN ON TOP
4 SNATCH
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DOLBY dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	BAIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	THE GIFT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	QUILLS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	PANABLA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	CHOCOLAT
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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ODEON-2	PANABLA
ROBEN	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
TANDEM-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	HIGHLANDER / LOST SOUL

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
QUEZON-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
REMAR	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
REMAR-2	OOOPS TEKA LANG

CUBAO

OCEAN SUPERAMA	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-A	SELOSA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	MADAME X

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79, 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	QUILLS
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLAT

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-2	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-3	PANABLA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MS. CONGENIALITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DRACULA 2000
CINEMA-6	TOO MUCH FLESH
CINEMA-7	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-8	PURPLE STORM
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAIT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE GIFT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-12	WEDDING PLANNER
CINEMA-14	QUILLS
CINEMA-15	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

LORES

CINEMA-2	MALIKOT D/W NAKED LIES
CINEMA-3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	QUILLS
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-3	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
CINEMA-4	THE GIFT
CINEMA-5	BAIT
CINEMA-6	WEDDING PLANNER

Showcase of new talents

JEFZ Café Sing-Along Bar at the New Solanie Hotel at 1811 Leon Guinto Street, Malaté, Manila, opens its season of shows with a hilarious showcase of talents in "Stariray," 9:30 tonight.

The show stars four of today's most sought-after singers and stand-up comedians in the sing-along circuit—Norman (who sings a la Pilita Corrales), Teri (who does his funny impressions of the superstar Nora Aunor), Kirai (a budding and very promising stand-up comedian) and Willy Jones (who can imitate the moves and voice of diva Shirley Bassey).

"Stariray" is written and directed by Chi de Jesus, with Rani Santos of Whiplash as choreographer.

For more information, call 524-8641 or e-mail jefzcafe@skyinet.net.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Renewed 'war' between liberals and conservatives

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT looks like the renewed "war" between liberals and conservatives over sex movies has gotten film people and the viewing public all worked up.

We have been deluged by calls and people have come up to us on different occasions and places (book launchings, seminars, parties, in movie theater lobbies, etc.) to express their opinions on the currently "hot" subject. Some of their inputs:

• Moralists and other critics of sexy movies shouldn't speak up unless and until they've actually seen the films they're excoriating. Too many critics fail to do this, so their opinion is second-hand and is therefore not to be taken seriously.

• Filmmakers should not deny that some of them choose sexual subject matter not just to dramatize social woes and realities but also to titillate the audience. This is clear from the way the sexy scenes are staged. They shouldn't pretend otherwise because viewers can see through their "artistic" alibis.

• Moralists shouldn't use the youth's welfare as a justification for going on a rampage against sexy movies. They should realize that, if a movie is classified R-18 or X, this effectively keeps it away from viewers who are less than 18 years old. As for viewers who are 18 or older, they are considered adults, so they should be able to "take" mature and even daring movies.

• One good result of the latest clampdown is the probability that it will discourage young actors and actresses from going bold. Too many of them are doing so because a majority of the movies now being filmed are sex-oriented, and this has a corrupting influence on these young performers, and on others who may be tempted to follow their example.

• Producers should really try to make movies that aren't sex-oriented. The success of "Tanging Yaman" and other non-R-18 movies proves that the viewing public is eager to see inspiring family films for a change.

• The Catholic Church should speak with one voice. There is a conflict between the Church's film evaluators, who find that "Live Show" is not pornographic, and the ultra-conservatives who say it is. The disparity confuses onlookers as to what the Church's official position is on the matter.

For our part, we further note that there is a general concern over the movie industry's fixation on sex, but people don't want to see a return to the benighted days of yore, when nudity and sex were kneejerk no-no's on the screen.

The solution to the current problem must take these two concerns into careful consideration, otherwise the situation will continue to deteriorate. What do you think dear reader?

TVtreats

ON Saturday, March 31 at 2:45 a.m. on Star Movies, (and again at 10:45 p.m.), "Lip Service" stars **Gail O'Grady**.

At 7 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel, "Crocodiles" focuses on the most frightening of all predators.

At 8 p.m., "Lions" takes a closer look at the King of the jungle. And at 9 p.m., "Shark Attack" takes viewers on a dive in the cold waters off the coast of South Africa, home to many fearsome creatures, including the Great White Shark.

Feedback

FROM **Marcelo RL** and **Charmaine DG** of Makati City: "The recent Bb. Pilipinas pageant has proven anew that only a few Filipinas are ready to face the challenge of international competitions.

"Only the Bb. Pilipinas-Universe titlist can claim to have given the most natural, well-thought-out and substantial answer to the final question. **Zorayda Ruth Andam** is a cum laude graduate of UP and is in her third year at the state university's College of Law.

"In fairness to **Cristina Fandino**, she exhibited wit and confidence during the semi-finals. Too bad that her "motherly" looks proved to be her Waterloo.

"**Michelle Reyes** was a crowd favorite, but she gave an out-of-this-world answer to the question, 'What is the most significant difference between the Filipina then and now?'

"She blurted out, 'The Filipina . . . Being a beauty queen does not depend on the luster of the crown, but on the substance of the head and heart." Imagine her competing alongside the likes of **Larra Mutta** (Ms U 2000) or **Pranyika Chopra** (Ms W 2000). *Lalamunin talaga siya.*"

Composer deserves apology from Bernard Palanca

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

THERE'S a big difference between simply singing a song, and singing a song and claiming it as yours when in fact it was written by another person. Ask **Bernard Palanca**.

Bernard was recently interviewed on TV regarding his team-up with **Rica Peralejo**. He suddenly burst into song to profess his feelings for her.

The song that Bernard supposedly composed for Rica goes: "*Dadalhin kita sa aking paraiso. Isisigaw ko ay iyong pangalan. Huwag kang mag-alala. 'Di ka masasaktan. Walang humpay na magmamahalan.*"

It turns out that the song, titled "Ilaw," is an original composition of Bernard's former bandmate **Jay Escober** of the defunct group Zoil. When the group disbanded, Jay joined Slide and Bernard became part of Bizquit Factory.

Jay must have had the shock of his life when he heard Bernard recite the song's lyrics on "TV Patrol," making it seem he, Bernard, made that song. After the interview, the Bizquit boys immediately sent Bernard a text message saying, "What you did was not right. We all know who really composed that song."

Bernard responded: "I was caught off-guard that's why I did that." He then asked his bandmates to explain and to apologize to Jay on his behalf, but they told Bernard he should go to Jay personally.

Bernard has not made any move to settle things with Jay. He's probably busy or he has simply chosen to ignore it.

Tracy Garcia, the band manager of Jay's Slide, isn't taking the matter lightly. She wants to set the record straight. "We're claiming copyright infringement against Bernard Palanca. We intend to question the acts and statements of Bernard in the proper venues."

You might think, what is the fuss all about? But to a musician, there's always a little part of him in each line he writes and every note he composes, so the outrage of Jay and his band is understandable.

How ironic. Music is said to be a universal language, yet it may cause friction when, as in this case, former bandmates are no longer in harmony.

Another Pinoy makes waves

A REGULAR Dollywood reader from San Francisco e-mailed me this bit of good news.

"Hi Dolly!

"Just want you to know that it's not only **Lea Salonga** who has invaded US television. There is also another Pinoy by the name of **Alec Mapa** (first cousin of **Jao Mapa**, if I'm not mistaken) who's making waves on the small screen. He plays a gay role in a sitcom titled "Some of My Best Friends" on CBS.

"He's really good and funny maybe because he's from theater. Whenever I watch him I can't help but compare him to **Roderick Paulate** because they have the same style in portraying a gay role. Kudos to the Filipino talent!"

— **Ricardo Fernando**, San Francisco, California

Bits and pieces.

IT looks like the **Dominic Ochoa-Janet McBride** team-up is fast gaining popularity. It's too early to tell, though, if romance would really blossom between them. I remember what Dominic told me in one of our long talks: "I don't want to get into anything serious just now. It's work first. I may have a steady date once in awhile but it does not mean I'm committed. If she's there, fine. But if she's not, fine, too. I don't want to be emotionally tied down for now." With Jeanette's charms, I wonder if Dominic can remain unattached for long. Right, Mindoro buddy (that's how I call Dominic)?

Patty Betita e-mailed me from LA. Sorry I can't disclose everything she wrote. Suffice it to say that she has finally found the happiness, peace and contentment which have eluded her during the **JV Ejercito** chapter of her life. Of course, their love child **Emilio** is with her in the US. Whatever Patty gets into, I hope it won't be just another chapter but a new book altogether with a happy ending this time around. *Tuod na ya, my Ilongga* sis?

A reader from California informed me that he spotted **Carmina Villaroel** and **Zoren Legazpi** shopping at the Ralph Lauren outlet store in the outskirts of LA. He said Mina is pretty even sans make-up and that the couple looked so happy together. They are finally reaping the rewards for staying together even when it would have been easier to give up due to all the pressures and intrigues.

For feedback, e-mail *wateringhole2000@yahoo.com.*

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

QUILLS - P 13 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	CHOCOLAT - P 13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:05	CROUCHING TIGER - P 13 11:20, 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:30
THE GIFT - P 13 12:35, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15	BAIT - P 13 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40	WEDDING PLANNER - P 13 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50

OPENS TOMORROW!

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AWARD NOMINATIONS

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Best Foreign Language Film @ the Golden Globe Awards

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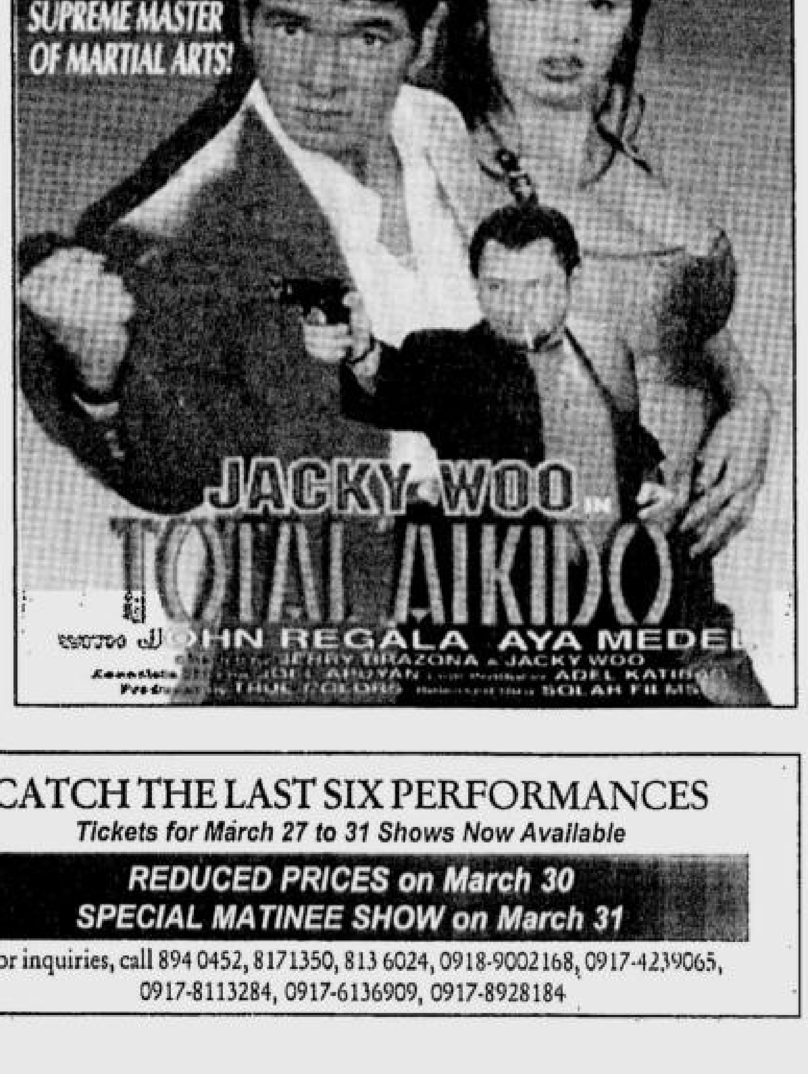

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TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2001 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

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Independent body seen to replace BIR

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE MACAPAGAL administration is planning to reform the country's tax collection system by abolishing the corruption-ridden Bureau of Internal Revenue and replacing it with a more financially independent body to implement a tax culture more suited to Filipinos.

This was disclosed yesterday by Revenue Commissioner Rene G. Bañez who said the proposed tax collection agency would be called the Philippine Internal Revenue Authority (Pira).

In his speech before members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bañez likened the proposed Pira to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) which have become more effective in fulfilling their mandates because of their independence. "They don't have to go to Congress every year to increase their share of the government's budget," Bañez said.

"We need to attain financial and organizational autonomy for the BIR so that we may at last become the true architects of our evolution. This autonomy is essential to the attainment of our final—and arguably most important—long-term reform initiative: the renewal of our commitment to the ideals of public service: transparency, competence and integrity," Bañez said.

By having financial independence, he said the new tax body would be able to modernize its equipment and hire the best people for the job not only for revenue collections but also for its backroom operations.

Shortly after he took office, Bañez said the BIR's information technology division bogged down after some of its key personnel were lured to more high-paying jobs in the private sector.

Bañez admitted that the BIR has been stalked or haunted by its reputation of being one of the more corrupt agencies of the government, which he attributed to patronage politics and unrealistic compensation schedules, and an atmosphere of poor work ethics. While there may be "reprobates" in the agency, Bañez said "there are thousands of employees who labor tirelessly under difficult working conditions on salaries often below the poverty line."

He said the agency could only shake off its corruption tag with the attainment of organizational and fiscal autonomy. "We need to have a realistic and economically viable compensation schedule for our employees to instill a truly performance-oriented work philosophy."

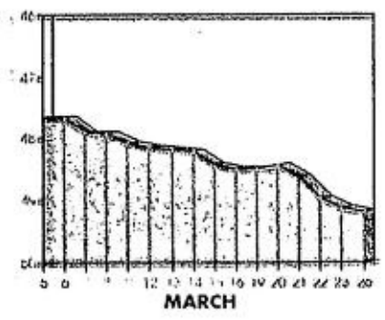
Bañez noted that the Philippine tax system was long overdue for reform considering that it was largely patterned after the US version. "We need to have a new tax system that is more appropriate to our culture," Bañez said.

The BIR is aiming to collect P408 billion this year in order to narrow the widening budget deficit to P145 billion from a worst-case projection of P225 billion.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY SAMMY REINOSO

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱49.185 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 26, 2001

¥123.08 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 123.08 as of 5 p.m., March 26, 2001

GOLD: $261.40/261.90
per ounce Hong Kong, March 26, 2001

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 1.1%

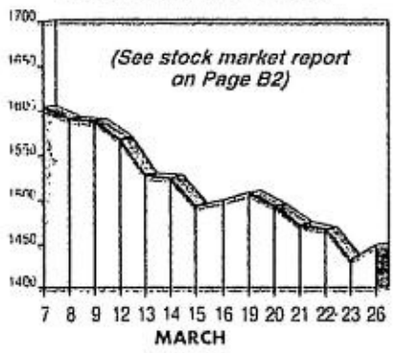
SHARE prices closed 1.1 percent higher yesterday after gains on Wall Street and in most regional markets, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 16.80 points to 1,448.37.

"I think we're just in a technical bounce primarily led by most of the big cap issues, which are taking their cue from the Dow

SHARES/ B2

PSE Composite Index



Macapagal pledges to plug huge revenue gap

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday pledged to take steps to plug huge revenue shortfalls that are pushing up interest rates, and said tax incentives offered to business might have to be cut over time.

"The current state of our tax administration needs fixing. Potential tax revenues are not being realized," she told an economic conference here.

"Instead, we see the small fixed income earners carrying a disproportionate share of the burden of taxation."

The government had a P136.1-billion budget deficit last year, equivalent to 4 percent of the gross national product (GNP). Ms Macapagal wants to limit it to P145 billion, or 3.8 percent of GNP this year.

She said the government remained committed to its target of balancing the budget by 2004 and reducing the fiscal deficit to 3.8 percent of GNP this year from around 4 percent in 2000.

She called for a review of special fiscal incentives now offered to convince businesses to invest in certain preferred sectors.

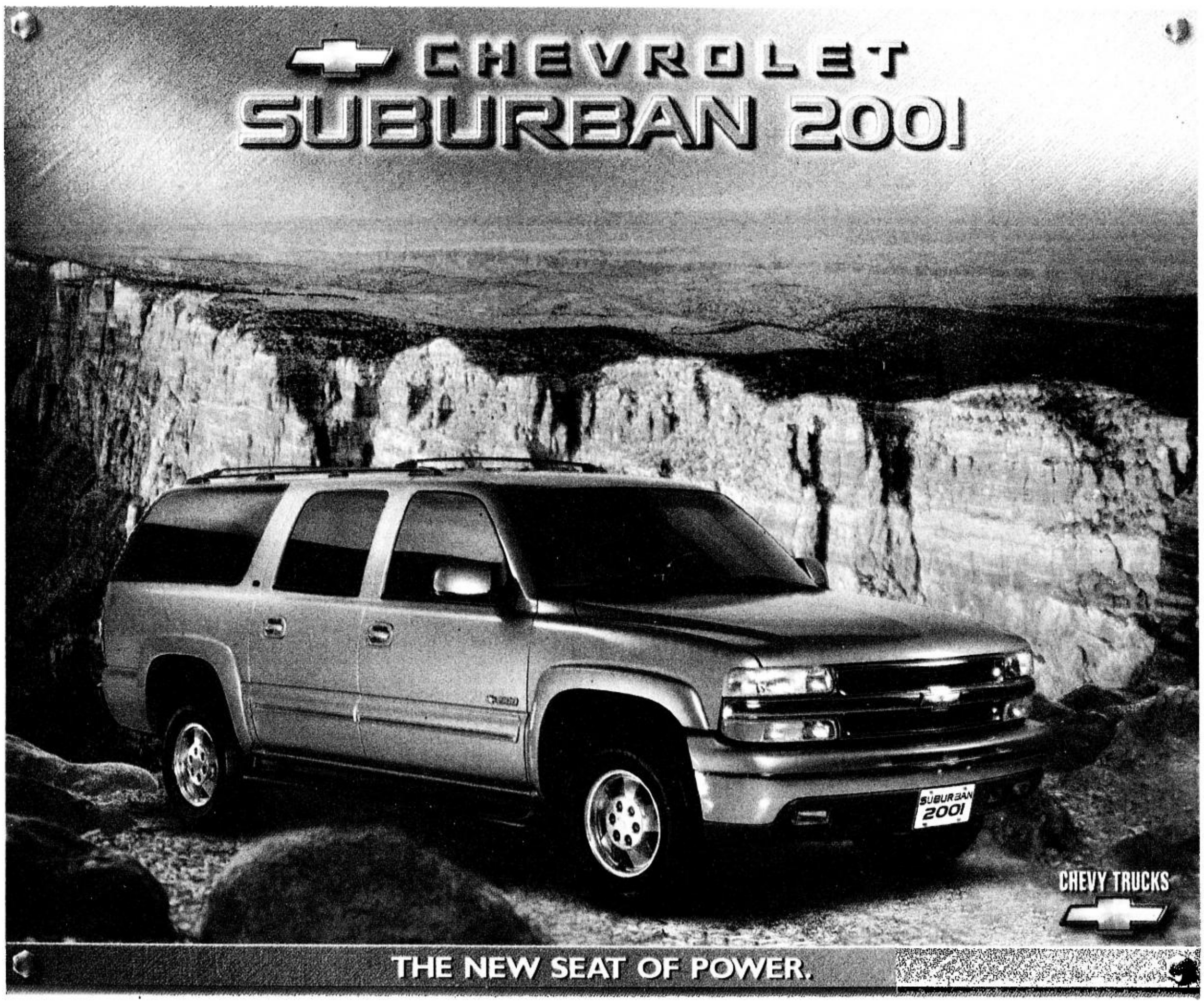
"Studies indicate a sizeable amount of taxes is being foregone as a result of tax breaks, tax holidays and exemptions from customs duties. This foregone revenue must be cut and reduced over time," she said.

She said she had also issued orders to impose belt-tightening in government departments and said a review of major capital projects committed under the previous government was now under way.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) earlier this month urged Manila to take steps to adopt "a comprehensive and well-designed medium-term fiscal program to strengthen credibility and . . . to deal with the rising level of public debt before it becomes a more serious burden on the economy."

It also called for legislative measures aimed at boosting revenues, tax reform and cuts in "low priority" spending to allow for stepped-up poverty reduction efforts.

MACAPAGAL/ B2



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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SO NOWADAYS crime stories are hitting the front pages again. Of course I only refer to your usual crime stories. Violence. Kidnapping. Rape. More violence. More kidnapping. More rape. Such crime stories are nothing special.

You know, they are just your ordinary day-to-day crime stories. They only talk about some casual crimes. These are the everyday violence which happens closer to your home. Nothing special, really! They are just the crimes committed against your family.

Fortunately, the rise in those trivial crimes does not affect our beloved public officials. Just thank your lucky stars above, you can still work your butt off to pay taxes to pay for their personal bodyguards with appetites the size of a dozen sumos.

So violence happens right outside your door. It's a small price to pay for government neglect. After all, everyday crimes are nothing compared to some despicably horrible wholesale crimes like "economic sabotage" and "plunder." These are priority.

* * *

BUT don't lose sleep over peace and order. This cute administration of Gloriaetta, in case you feel like a zombie because you were up the whole night last night, has the RTW-like solution. It's ready made for the problem at hand. Just call the Marines!

A couple of days ago, you see, Gloriaetta already called the Philippine Army as "my" soldiers. There, if you wonder about her control over the military, or the police, for that matter, the very possessive pronoun "my" leaves no doubt that she owns them.

It only goes to show that, since Gloriaetta is the rightful owner of all our men in uniform, she can then tell them what to do, and who knows, by some chance they may even also obey. For to fight crime, Her Cuteness is using "my" (i.e. her) soldiers.

I am not imagining it. The Commander in Chief really said the military must help the police to fight the rising criminality. Hmm. Soon, roaming the streets all over the country are some battle-scarred men toting some high-powered Armalites. Is that it?

* * *

STILL, you cannot take it as a sign of hopelessness—this Gloriaetta's "just-call-the-Marines" move. I have a feeling that it was meant for media consumption. It's just another prescription by this cute administration's spin doctors.

For one, nobody in the government openly admits that criminality is making the biggest comeback since the last time Benjie Paras won MVP. All of a sudden, crime is happening again, but it is all happening only in media, not in real life.

Even if it is true, to this cute administration, it was all the fault of the man named Band ... Wrist Band. Just how the former administration should own the blame, is a different story. *Basta*, it's their fault, period! Pack up! That's it!

If media are playing up crime, why, of course, the solution also lies in media. Only there can the battle be won. By announcing to media her call for the military to step in, Gloriaetta instills fear in the hearts of criminals. As a bonus, she kills you with fear!

* * *

ALL RIGHT, so maybe this cute administration is still in a state of denial. To their minds, media are only playing it all up, if not totally making up, turning every little crime into celebrated crime stories. I'm afraid the administraiton contradicts itself.

If crime is not rising, why bother with a solution? It's even a stupid solution. Those of us who are old enough, surely, know only too well the horror when the military gets too much involved in running things in this country.

Let me see if I got it right—criminality is not really rising, because it is only rising in media, and as proof, this cute administration is using the military to solve the problem that doesn't exist, since it's the fault of the Wrist Band administration, anyway.

By extension, therefore, the blame should go entirely to the former PNP chief, the former Director General Panfilo Lacson, who is campaigning for a seat in the Senate. Of course he is running in the opposition ticket. He only deserves to be destroyed!

* * *

YET all this time, I thought that Ping Lacson did rather well as PNP chief. I am not alone. Even Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, the self-confessed cappo de tutti cappi in *jueteng*, admitted that Lacson did not take bribe from the *jueteng* syndicates.

That's why, and this is between us girls, Chavit and Ping are sending feelers to each other for peace. They are scheduling a meeting. Neutral ground, *siempre*. Supposedly, Chavit is willing to help Ping get votes in Chavit's turf in the North.

Anyway, a ranking police officer told me that some PNP officers joined the plot to oust Wrist Band because they did not like Ping. And why was that? Well, Lacson took them out of "juicy" positions. Ax to grind, in short.

As I took it, and the source did not correct me, which meant I was not wrong, Ping did a lot of cleaning up in the police which the "corrupt" did not like. They have been doing it for the longest time. How dare this stupid jerk disrupt the racket!

* * *

GROUPS which are watching crimes not as a hobby but as advocation, because even if they are called "crimewatch" groups, they do not just watch crimes, and they do something about the problem, never hid their liking for Ping.

If you talk to them, they will probably say it was not even Ping's move to give the police force a new image. Sure, under him, we saw policemen killing themselves into shape, just to achieve the beauty-contestant waist line required by Ping. It's not that.

It's just that Ping believed in crime prevention more than crime solution. It's nice if the killer is caught, but still you are already dead. And it was Ping who made a big thing out of that biggest of tools in crime prevention—police visibility.

One time, Ping called the police chiefs from all over the country. On the screen on stage, he showed them how much their units were supposed get as gas budget. At that time, some higher-ups in the police loved to hoard the gas budget for themselves.

* * *

AND so Ping told them to report to him if, for any mysterious reason, they would not get the exact amount from their regional directors. The reasoning was simple enough. If the police have not enough gas, they cannot keep the peace. Their visibility suffers, what else?

Know what, all of a sudden, our police force had the gasoline to go out more often into the streets. Know what's more, our police force did have to make, uhm, "extra" money (i.e. *kotong*) to buy gas to do their work. Now I heard *kotong* is back.

Anyway, let's face it. You can pass on the blame for the rise in criminality which does not exist, because it exists only in media, which is playing up the problem, or you can do something about it.

For example, you can start with better management in the police force.

Ayala to issue ₱1.75B worth of preferred shares

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

AYALA Corp. yesterday announced the issuance of P1.75 billion worth of preferred shares through a private placement offering.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Ayala Corp. managing director Renato Marzan said the company's board of directors has approved the issuance of preferred shares with a maturity of five years and a put option on the third year.

The subscribers to the new offering will be given preferred status as to dividends but the shares will not be convertible to common shares. The preferred shares will have no voting or preemptive rights.

"The issuance, which will be underwritten by BPI Capital Corp. as lead underwriter, shall be subject to such terms and conditions that may be agreed upon by the corporation and BPI Capital," Marzan said.

The dividend will be at a floating rate based on 91-day treasury bills yields.

At the end of the 3rd year from issue date, the preferred shareholders shall have the right to sell the outstanding preferred shares to the issuer at a price equivalent to the sum of the aggregate issue value of the preferred shares plus all accrued and unpaid dividends.

"It's good for them because they are borrowing at T-bill rate. That's cheaper than borrowing from a bank," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said.

Roxas said it was likely that Ayala Corp. already had received firm pledges to subscribe to the private placement offering. Otherwise, he said the offering might not be too attractive because if the yields were based on floating 91-day T-bill rate anyway, investors might just as well put their money directly in T-bills instead.

"There's no incentive because there's no convertibility (to Ayala Corp. common shares)," Roxas said.

A few months ago, Ayala Corp. redeemed $48 million worth of bonds that were converted by bondholders into shares in its property subsidiary, Ayala Land Inc.

ITALIAN SALES PITCH

Special Presidential Envoy Cesar B. Bautista speaks before Italian business groups to explain the positive trends in the Philippines initiated by President Macapagal-Arroyo. With him at the dialogue are Consul Antonio Mercado, Ambassador to Rome Phillip Lhuillier and Commercial Attaché Rosalie Evangelista. Bautista reassured the businessmen of the increased transparency under the new administration.

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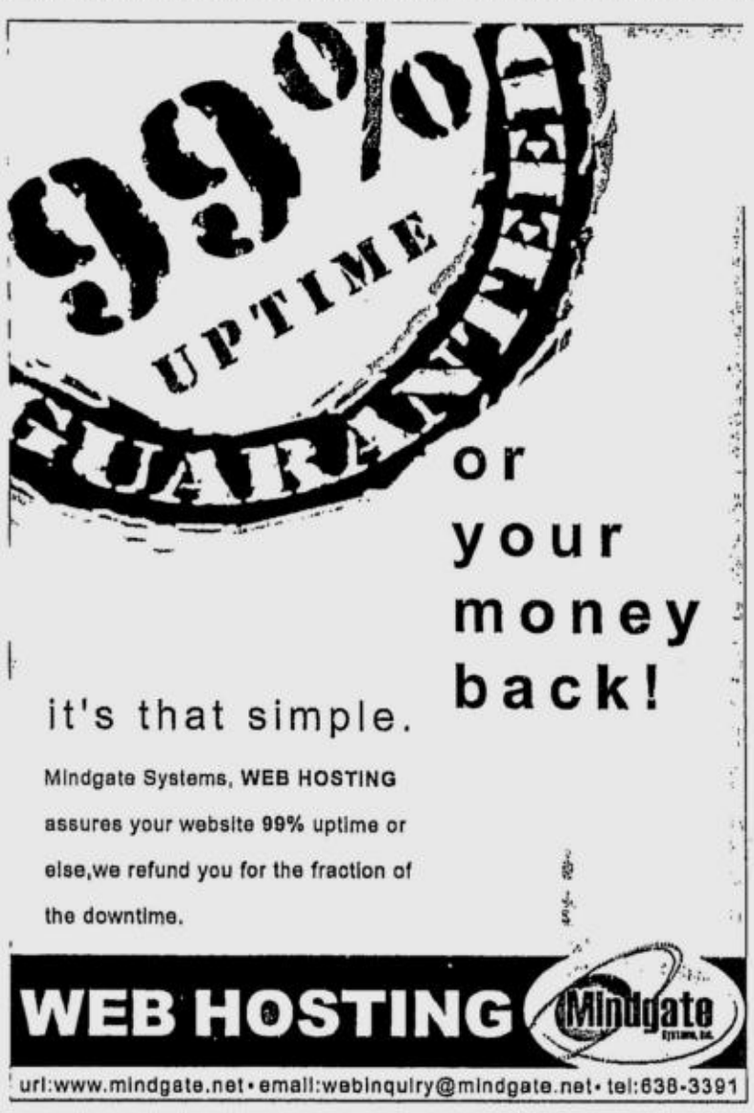

Macapagal . . .

(From page B1)

Members of the business community in the Philippines, along with the Economic Intelligence Unit, have said the incentives were needed to encourage continued foreign investment in the country.

The President said that in addition to austerity measures which have been adopted by her government, she was personally undertaking a government review of major capital projects.

She said this aims to correct an "unwanted legacy" by her deposed predecessor Joseph Estrada in which government projects financed by foreign aid were "poorly implemented."

This tied up counterpart government funding that could have been deployed elsewhere, she said.

"The past administration, in two years of large deficit spending, left government finances in a precarious state" and compounded it by borrowing in the domestic market and crowding out the private sector, she said.

"We will not use fiscal policy for short-term pump-priming measures," she added.

"We will not compromise the central bank's efforts to reduce interest rates," nor rock its exchange rate policy, "by not allowing large deficits in government to persist."

With foreign investment outflows due to the political crisis last year, and with the United States and Japanese economies weakening, commentators have questioned how the President can revitalize the economy.

Ms Macapagal said the series of interest rate cuts by the central bank should help boost bank lending and "unleash forces in the private sector for more investment." *AFP, Reuters*

Shares rise 1.1%

(From page B1)

(Jones industrials index) and the recovery in other regional markets," Oliver Plana at Asiasec Equities Inc. said.

"The last few days we've been basically pushed back by weaknesses in most major markets. We're looking at externals simply because there's not much to go on as far as domestic factors are concerned."

But other analysts said yesterday's rise may not be sustained in the coming days.

"Of course the US market will show the direction, and there is also the uncertainty of (May's congressional) elections," said Elline Salvatierra at KGI Securities.

Volume rose to 1.47 billion shares worth P586 million from 531 million shares worth P486 million on Friday. *AFP*

DISCLOSURES

THE ANNUAL stockholders' meeting of **iPeople Inc.** will be held on April 25, 3 p.m. at the Podium 4, 4/F Condominium Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, Makati City.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 19, 9:30 a.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine Floor, Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of March 13 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

MANILA Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 16, 10 a.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom of Peninsula Manila. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 26 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 16, 4 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom of Peninsula Manila. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 26 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, March 26, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69	69	69	54,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	50.5	51	50.5	50.5	29,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	218	221	215	221	176,960
Philippine National Bank	47	49.5	47	49	165,600
Phil. Savings Bank	30	30	28	29	25,100
Security Bank Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.5	98,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	1,300
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	3,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	40,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1185	1185	1175	1175	3,730
Sun Life Financial Serv.	805	825	805	820	17,100
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	41	42	41	42	11,400
Globe Telecom Inc.	655	660	655	660	720
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.046	0.042	0.046	3,100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3,000
Piltel	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.51	830,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	700	705	695	700	500,010
Ivantage Corp.	0.94	0.96	0.94	0.96	350,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.049	67,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	44.5	45	44.5	44.5	3,500
Manila Electric Co. B	55	55.5	55	55.5	166,800
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.66	1,076,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.88	0.92	270,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	14,736,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	0.95	0.99	0.95	0.99	440,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	190,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	10	10	10	10	1,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.88	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	12,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	34	34	34	10,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.56	1.72	1.56	1.72	156,000
RFM Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	45,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47	47	47	47	19,100
San Miguel Corp. B	52	52.5	52	52.5	177,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	2,110,000
Abolitiz Equity Ventures	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	57,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	12.25	11.75	12	1,400
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.85	40,000
APC Group Inc	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12	12.75	11.75	12.75	14,200
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.42	410,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	90,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.04	1	1	1,540,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2	2	2	2	11,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	21	21.75	21	21.25	33,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	10,000
Ionics Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	100,600
Ipeople Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.12	2.08	2.12	198,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	5,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.71	0.73	2,170,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.49	1,340,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,510,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.28	370,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	4,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	1,930,000
Metro Alliance Holdings-B	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	5,580,000
Music Corp.	2.55	2.65	2.55	2.65	167,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.8	0.88	0.8	0.88	650,000
SPI Technologies Inc	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	1,600,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.54	0.57	0.53	0.57	790,000
Manila Jockey Club	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	5,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	41	42.5	41	42.5	686,900
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	675	675	675	675	300
Jollibee Warrants	11.75	11.75	11.25	11.25	10,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	260,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	2,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	9,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	5,500
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,690,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	1,370,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.74	1.9	1.74	1.88	17,263,000
City & Land Developers	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.06	0.0725	0.06	0.0725	2,100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.3	1,900,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	150,000
MINING					
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	2,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0034	1,001,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	2,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	1,870,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	24,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0044	0.0048	0.0044	0.0048	17,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0048	0.0042	0.0048	25,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	4,400,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	614,990	72,694,850.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	373,072,330	455,303,380.00
PRO	24,975,000	53,664,670.00
Mining	1,006,870,000	3,821,500.00
OIL	70,410,000	363,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,475,942,320	585,847,800.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	600.51	UP 6.51
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,971.76	UP 8.94
PRO	529.56	UP 11.49
Mining	1,157.60	DOWN 1.09
OIL	1.64	UP 0.11
All Shares Index	704.16	UP 0.95
Composite	1,448.37	UP 16.80

NO. OF ADVANCES: 53; NO. OF DECLINES: 18; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 25; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 96 NO. OF TRADES: 1,743

CURRENCIES

Mar. 26, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.123722	1.000000	49.0480
Japan	Yen	0.009153	0.008145	0.3995
United Kingdom	Pound	1.601641	1.425300	69.9081
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144079	0.128216	6.2887
Switzerland	Franc	0.652796	0.580923	28.4931
Canada	Dollar	0.718584	0.639468	31.3646
Singapore	Dollar	0.629712	0.560381	27.4856
Australia	Dollar	0.557264	0.495909	24.3233
Bahrain	Dinar	2.980853	2.652661	130.1077
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.299643	0.266652	13.0787
Brunei	Dollar	0.626902	0.557880	27.3629
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000108	0.000096	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	0.025452	0.022650	1.1109
UAE	Dirham	0.305949	0.272264	13.3540
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.000765	0.0375
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.889900	43.6478
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.454999	22.3168
France	Franc	0.152450	0.135664	6.6540
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.403819	19.8065
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064672	3.1720
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022060	1.0820
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000460	0.0226
Finland	Markka	0.168187	0.149670	7.3410
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004439	0.2177
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005348	0.2623
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.02206	1.0820
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.12994	55.4213

Gov't sees early end to dispute between Lopez firm, utility

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Dante Canlas yesterday assured that the government was working toward a speedy resolution of the crisis involving the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The National Economic and Development Authority is part of a three-member task force formed by Malacañang to evaluate Maynilad's petition for a tariff increase to recover huge foreign exchange losses, the other two government agencies being MWSS and the Department of Finance.

Canlas said the task force was waiting for the necessary numbers from Maynilad, a joint venture between the Lopez group's Benpres Holdings Corp. and Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux of France. Once the task force receives the figures needed to audit Maynilad's finances, he said it would be ready to come up with a position within the next two to three days.

But Canlas told reporters in an interview during the anniversary celebration of the Philippine Economic Society that the government would first try to work within the framework of the existing 25-year concession to resolve the crisis without having to trigger any legal battle.

"Both parties agreed to sit down for a contract renegotiation but since the contract renegotiation has to start on an existing contract, that's the first level. That means that you first have to see what you can get from the EPA (extraordinary price adjustment) provision if there's such a provision for sharp changes in foreign exchange. Then, we can move on to more difficult issues such as Cera (currency exchange rate adjustment) or auto-Cera, but maybe you don't even have to go to Cera," Canlas explained.

"We might not have to resort to auto-Cera because this might just lead to a lawsuit. We'll try not to trigger some legal problems by staying within the framework of the existing concession," he said.

The Asian Development Bank, the key financial backer of the privatization of the MWSS concessions, has already aired its concern over the viability of Maynilad following its conflict with the MWSS over a tariff increase.

ADB country representative Gunther Hecker had said the last thing the multilateral institution would want to see was the Maynilad concession reverting to government control. He said it was imperative that the MWSS and Maynilad come up with a win-win formula on foreign exchange adjustment as soon as possible.

The ADB, which has always cited the privatization of the MWSS as one of the best success stories involving public-private sector partnership in Asian water resources management, wanted to see the Lopez-controlled Maynilad on a healthy financial footing.

When Maynilad took over the west zone of the MWSS concession, it assumed 90 percent of the dollar-denominated debt of the whole system then at an exchange rate of P35 to $1. The depreciation of the peso since then has impinged on the company's cash flow.

Maynilad has already decided to suspend the payment of its concession fee to the MWSS starting March 8, citing factors beyond its control which were affecting the economics of the water concessionaire. For the whole of 2001, Maynilad is expected to pay a total of P3 billion in concession fees to the MWSS. During the first two months of the year, it has already paid almost P500 million to the government agency.

Maynilad seeks TRO vs MWSS

BY CHRISTINE A. GAYLICAN

THE LOPEZ-OWNED Maynilad Water Services Inc. recently sought a court order that will keep Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System from "touching" the water company's $200-million performance bond.

The move came after Maynilad stopped paying its monthly concession fee to MWSS last month following the failure of the MWSS' Board of Trustees and Regulatory Office to act on the concessionaire's petition for an automatic currency rate adjustment.

"We have filed for a TRO at the Court of Appeals so that they (MWSS) could not lay their hands on our performance bond to cover for our concession fee," an official of Maynilad, who requested anonymity, said in an interview yesterday.

The Maynilad official noted that another P230 million in concession fee falls due today. This will bring to P460 million the total amount owed by the Lopez-owned company to MWSS.

Maynilad is supposed to pay a total of P3 billion in concession fee. It has so far paid P500 million before it decided to suspend payment.

The concession agreement states that MWSS can tap the performance bond posted by water operators Maynilad and Manila Water Services Inc. of the Ayala Group in case they failed to pay their fees.

"The MWSS could file a counter argument to our petition at the CA," the official said.

According to the Maynilad official, the 60-day TRO sought by the company will buy them some time to solve their current issues with MWSS such as the automatic Cera and other financial concerns.

The Maynilad official told the INQUIRER the company was confident that it would be granted the automatic Cera despite earlier Malacañang statements that "it might not be possible since it would mean amending the 25-year concession agreement."

Allowing Maynilad to recover its financial losses since 1997 by granting its Cera petition, according to sources, could trigger as much as P64 per cubic meter increase in the basic water rates.

The company claimed that it had incurred foreign exchange losses amounting to P2.75 billion since 1997. It said it had to service higher debts due to the fall of the peso to as low as 50 to $1 from the 27 to $1 rate when the company acquired the loan in 1997.

COUNTRY SHARES

As of March 27, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1.95M	2,100,000*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	800,000	-
CAMP JOHN HAY	-	350,000
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CAPITOL HILLS	115,000	-
CELEBRITY SPORTS	200,000	215,000
CLUB FILIPINO	-	350,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	450,000	500,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	130,000*	150,000/170,000*
FONTANA B/C*/B**	120,000*	92,500/150,000*280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	290,000	300,000/420,000*/450,000**
LUISITA GOLF CLUB	-	550,000
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	395,000	405,000/525,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C (w/lot)*	395,000	400,000/2.0 M*
MANILA POLO CLUB	3,200,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	850,000/900,000*	-
METROPOLITAN A/B*	160,000	180,000*
MIMOSA IND./CORP.*	200,000/350,000*	240,000/550,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C*	300,000/600,000**	330,000/425,000*
PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN	80,000	90,000
PUERTO AZUL A/B*	130,000	140,000/Pls. call*
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	250,000
RIVIERA A/B*	240,000	280,000/420,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	650,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*	100,000	130,000/150,000*
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	250,000	275,000/350,000*/450,000**
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.	Pls. call	Pls. call
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	320,000	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS CC/GOLF*	490,000/1.1M*	495,000/1.25M*
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	850,000	870,000
VALLE VERDE IND.	185,000	195,000
VALLEY GOLF	330,000	350,000
WACK WACK	8.5M	-

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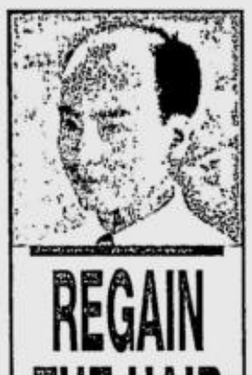

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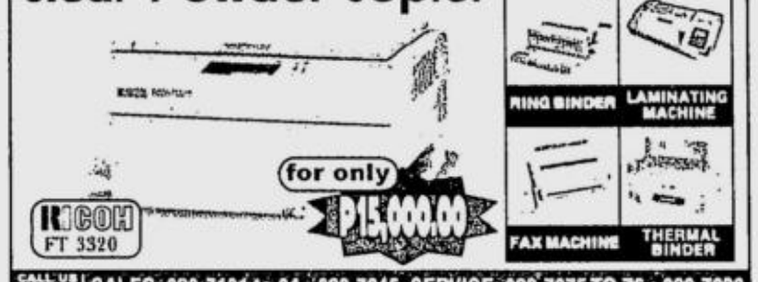

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Thursday, March 29, at 12:00 noon
Thursday, March 29, at 7:00pm
Location: Hyatt Regency, 2702 Roxas Blvd. Pasay City
Tel. 63-2-8331234

Cebu
Dates & Times:
Monday, March 26, at 7:00 pm
Tuesday, March 27, at 12:00 noon
Tuesday, March 27, at 7:00pm
Location: Mactan Island Resort Shangrila, Punta Engano Rd. Lapulapu City 6015, Cebu
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91-DAY BILL AT 9.05%

Gov't to offer 1-year T-bills via tap facility

THE BUREAU of Treasury yesterday said it would open a tap facility window for P1.5 billion worth of old series one-year treasury bills.

In a note to government securities dealers, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the one-year paper to be re-issued was the series auctioned on March 26 where it fetched a rate of 10.957 percent.

The Treasury said the paper would be offered at 10.8 percent.

Edeza said offers for the 364-day T-bill will be accepted from Monday until 11 a.m. on Wednesday.

Edeza also said the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rates could decline by five to 10 basis points if economic fundamentals and inflation remain healthy.

"If the fundamentals look promising and inflation picture looks good, then we can expect rates to stabilize and hopefully decline a bit by 5-10 basis points," Edeza told reporters after Treasury's weekly T-bill auction.

"For now and for the next few weeks, rates will hover (in) a tight range."

At yesterday's auction, the average rate for 91-day T-bills stood at 9.059 percent versus last week's 9.656 percent. Edeza said the lowest bid at 8.877 percent was a historical low.

Edeza said the inflation picture looked "good" although March data have not been released yet.

"We will wait for whatever action to be taken by the BSP (central bank)," he added.

The central bank on Friday cut benchmark interest rates by 50 basis points in line with US Federal Reserve's move, taking the cumulative rate cut since December to 500 basis points.

The central bank jacked up overnight rates 400 basis points in October to support the peso reeling under the country's political crisis. The borrowing rate now stands at 10.0 percent and the lending rate at 12.25 percent. *Reuters*

Oil import bill up 60.8%

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

THE COUNTRY'S oil import bill rose by 60.8 percent in 2000 mainly due to hefty increases in crude prices during the period hitting a high of $30.52 per barrel in October.

The Department of Energy said the total oil import bill last year reached $3.721 billion compared to $2.313 billion in 1999. Import volume increased slightly from 136.5 million barrels in 1999 to 139.17 million barrels last year.

Crude prices last year averaged at $26.14 per barrel, much higher than the $17.21 average price per barrel in 1999.

In a statement, the DOE said "the oil bill could have been significantly higher if not for the country's efforts to reduce reliance on imported fuel."

Earlier, the department reported that the share of imported oil to the country's total energy use slid from 50 percent in 1999 to 44 percent in 2000.

This translates to about $2.8 billion in savings in terms of displaced oil imports.

Crude oil accounted for 81.4 percent of total oil imports while petroleum products comprised 18.6 percent.

The scheduled commercial production of natural gas in the Malampaya gas field in Palawan starting next year is expected to further reduce the country's oil importation. The $2-billion project is expected to yield 3.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, which will be used to supply fuel for three power plants in Luzon.

The DOE said the decline in oil use was evident in the power sector. This was due to the retirement of many oil-fired power plants.

Oil accounted for 21 percent of the country's power generation mix in 2000 compared to 28.5 percent in 1999.

Oil-fired facilities in Bataan, Sucat, Manila, Negros and Cebu—with an aggregate capacity of 1,050 megawatts—were decommissioned last year.

The 1,000-mw, gas-fired Sta. Rita power plant in Batangas and the 470-mw, coal-fired Mauban generator in Quezon replaced these facilities.

"The rest of the country's energy comes from coal, 38 percent; geothermal, 25 percent and hydro, 16 percent.

New Internet service launched

BY ANTHONY O. ALCANTARA

SMART Communications Inc. has launched a cheaper wireless Internet service that is expected to increase the company's revenues from data services.

The new service using General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) allows faster transmission of data and an "always online" Internet access. It sends information through 'packets' of data."

GPRS users will be charged based not on airtime but on the amount of data transmitted as measured in packets.

Anastacio R. Martirez, Smart head for personal communications and mobile services division, said this add-on service was in line with Smart's strategy involving mobile data services based on text messaging or Wireless Application Protocol, a standard that converts data from the Internet into something suitable for mobile phones.

GPRS-enabled cell phone

The use of WAP is expected to gain popularity when GPRS becomes widely used as a transmission medium.

"The launch of Smart's GPRS service will pave the way for the introduction of more advanced mobile Internet and wireless data services addressed to the high-end and corporate markets," said Martirez

Users can also use their special GPRS handsets as a wireless modem that can be connected to their laptop or handheld computer to access the Internet.

"People with high mobility who want instant and constant connection to the Internet anytime, anywhere will benefit most from this new service. As the technology and the market develop further, we will see more content-rich services running on GPRS," said Martirez.

This pioneering GPRS service will be available for free to Smart's global system for mobile communications (GSM) subscribers until April 30. The company will announce its tariff scheme starting May 1.

Global prospects for Mindanao agriculture

(Second of two parts)

MINDANAO ONE

Luis P. Lorenzo Jr.

EL NIÑO is here, and cloud seeding must be employed as extensively as possible in support of all agricultural crops, not just rice and corn. Irrigation systems must be repaired in anticipation of extensive use. Our own barometer shows that our rainfall pattern in Western and Southern Mindanao has decreased alarmingly in the last two years.

The government must pave the way for Philippine products to gain fair access to the international markets. Our officials should be prepared with complete information prior to trade talks; they should identify and analyze current data to provide the basis for a national strategy; and they should take a strong and unified position for the country in bilateral trade negotiations.

We talk free trade and global competitiveness, but the reality is that very few countries that echo these words actually allow Mindanao's agricultural products access to their markets. Bananas are slapped high tariffs in China (42 percent), Korea (50 percent), and Japan (15 percent). We face various non-tariff barriers in the United States, Australia, Taiwan, Iran, and Iraq.

Our tariffs on live cattle imports should be reduced, as tariffs discourage initiatives. For example, live cattle imports are taxed at 7 percent, regardless of size. The government should differentiate between those that weigh 350 kilos or less, which still need to be fattened (in which case tariff should be practically zero), from those that weigh over 350 kilos and thus go directly to the butcher.

We ask the government to listen to us, and not just hear us. Listening means being pro-active in finding the solutions and seeing actual results in the initiatives taken. We also need to develop a sense of urgency and a can-do attitude. All of the above require milestones, accomplishment targets and individuals in charge of them. If people don't perform, they should be replaced.

What can we in the private sector contribute to this effort in support of Mindanao and Philippine agriculture? How do we assert our position in the modern, global, competitive environment?

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new" (Alfred, Lord Tennyson), and we've found that the order of today is dictated by the market - our customers and no longer by the suppliers

I'd like to think that the Philippine mango is the best in the world, but when I go to a supermarket in Japan, or Australia, or the United States, I see different varieties of mangoes from 10 different countries. The customer is king, and it is he who decides which mango he will buy.

Therefore, we in this business must link up with our markets, stay in close touch with them, and learn the trends and directions that will drive our product development efforts to success. In everything we do and in every step of the way, we must constantly benchmark ourselves against no less than the best in the world.

This is no longer a passing trend or buzzword, it is now the norm for companies that want to survive and succeed amid intensifying competition. In the case of the Lapanday Group, we have institutionalized a passion for quality. We have tapped independent third parties to reinforce our seal of quality assurance, earning the ISO-9002 Certification for our plantation and packaging operations and, very soon, for our quality control and port operations as well.

We have also seen success stories in the farmers sector, with the beneficiaries now enjoying an improved quality of life. Let us focus on the winners and try to replicate their efforts.

A cooperative of rice farmers in Davao del Sur, for example, has been effectively increasing its members' production yields and cash surpluses. In General Santos, fish farmers like those of the Alsons group have a profitable and expanding fish-farming program.

In Northern Bukidnon, another group of farmers has been successful in its cattle-fattening program with Del Monte, more than doubling its net cash flow from P10,000 to P22,000 per hectare. Portion of the corn they grow and harvest is now used directly as feeds for the cattle they fatten.

Also in Bukidnon, we know of poultry breeders thriving in their tie-up with larger companies that that market, process, and/or distribute their poultry products. Many other companies besides Lapanday and Del Monte have invested heavily in seed-to-shelf operations to serve the international markets for fresh tropical produce. Succeeding along this path requires focus, patience, and a passion for competitive excellence.

However, even as we strive to increase our productivity, establish niche markets, and pursue innovations to better promote our products, we must monitor our industries closely. We don't want to fall into the trap of an oversupply situation, such as what we experienced in the not-too-distant past in the ramie and prawn industries when the international market became over-saturated and these industries collapsed.

While pushing forward, we must always keep an eye on what the market can absorb in order to maintain supply-demand equilibrium. To achieve this, industry associations should organize (by product sector), interact, and be listened to in frequent dialogues with the Department of Agriculture, especially on matters where intervention is required.

Of equal importance in this era of progress is our commitment to uphold a genuine concern for nature; we must all be responsible to care for her and put back as much as we

take. "The nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself." (F. D. Roosevelt). Sustainable agriculture is here to stay, and market demand shows a general shift towards low-chemical and organically grown produce.

It is critical for us to think, function and move forward as a team -- we need to unify the government and private sector and get the different departments to work together for the greater good.

We in Mindanao who have been through war face yet another, and it is in the global market. We will need all of our weapons of teamwork, flexibility, speed of response, up-to-date market information, and uncompromising quality to win this war.

Let us think of it as an integral force in our war against poverty. Our mission to bring our region's world-class produce to the international markets shall have a deep and lasting impact not only on our businesses but also on Mindanao's economy, and, consequently, on the quality of life of our people.

(Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. is the chairman and CEO of Lapanday Holdings Corp.)

SingTel wins Optus bidding

SYDNEY—Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. emerged as the winner of a drawn out auction for Cable & Wireless Optus Ltd. on Monday, offering up to A$4.57 per Optus share to create a pan-Asian carrier capitalized at $24 billion.

But Australian and Singaporean investors were less enthused, driving down the shares of both companies as they digested the impact of the three-option offer on SingTel's earnings and the prospect of taking up scrip of Asia's eighth-largest carrier.

"The transaction is earnings dilutive. We believe we are trading short-term earnings for long-term growth," SingTel chief executive Lee Hsien Yang told reporters in Sydney. to a record low of $0.4888.

"It appears any initially positive Australian dollar implications will be offset by negative sterling and US dollar flows . . . due to a larger proportion of UK and US owners swapping their Australian dollar payments," Westpac currency strategist Adam Myers said.

SingTel's victory in the long and arduous battle for Optus, Australia's second largest carrier, was sealed on Sunday when rival Vodafone Plc withdrew its conditional offer, saying the proposed transaction did not meet its return criteria.

Singtel's outmaneuvering of Vodafone marks the first setback for the world's largest mobile phone company's overseas acquisition trail since its hostile takeover of German telecom and engineering group Mannesmann last year.

SingTel has valued its proposal at A$14.9 billion (US$7.3 billion) to A$16.0 billion based on the assumption that Optus' 52.5 percent owner, Britain's Cable & Wireless Plc, would accept the maximum cash component of the cash-and-scrip option.

The alternatives are all-scrip or cash, scrip and bonds.

Optus valued the bid at up to A$17.2 billion.

On a key regulatory hurdle, Lee said the Australian government had indicated it would support SingTel's takeover of Optus to create the leading wireless operator in Asia.

SingTel will seek a general listing in Australia.

"It's all dependent on the SingTel share price. If the SingTel price gets hit, down goes the offer," said a trader at a major Australian brokerage.

Lee told reporters that the Singapore government was prepared to reduce its SingTel stake to 65-69 percent from 78 percent.

"All the defensive qualities which made SingTel attractive have disappeared with this acquisition, which is expensive," said Gillem Tulloch, analyst at Nomura Securities

Optus said its majority shareholder had agreed to accept the offer in respect of 19.9 percent of Optus' issued capital.

Optus shareholders will have three payment options under the SingTel proposal—1.66 SingTel shares, or 0.80 SingTel shares plus A$2.25 in cash, or 0.54 SingTel shares plus A$2.00 in cash plus A$0.45 in SingTel US dollar-denominated bonds for every Optus share.

SingTel said the all-scrip offer had an implied value of A$4.57 per share, the cash-and-scrip option was worth A$4.45 per share, while the third option involving the bond component had an implied value of A$3.94 per share

Lee said that under the SingTel valuation assumption, the premium ranged from 0.9 percent to 11.3 percent based on a 30 trading days average share price of A$3.90 prior to March 24.

SingTel, which has operations in 14 nations, said it had made available a total cash and bond amount of A$9.25 billion to finance the bid.

The bond component would be up to A$2 billion and the cash element would be available in either Australian and US dollars on a fixed exchange rate of A$1 to US$0.494. *Reuters*

AN UNIDENTIFIED man walks into the Sydney offices of Cable & Wireless Optus. Singapore Telecommunications won the battle to purchase Australia's second biggest phone company. AP

Think tanks forecast slowdown in Japan

TOKYO—Japan's leading private think tanks forecasted a slowdown in the domestic economy in the next financial year due to curbs on capital investment and consumer spending, a press report said Sunday

The 2001-2002 economic growth forecasts by the 16 research and financial institutes averaged 0.8 percent, down from 1.3 percent for the financial year ending on Saturday, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

The average is also far below the official estimate of 1.7 percent for the 2001-2002 term. The government has declared that it was on track to meet its growth target of 1.2 percent for the current year.

Only two of the think tanks predicted that the real-term growth rate would improve in the next financial year.

"Many predicted that investment in plants and equipment, which had been led by the information technology sector, would struggle to grow while it is hard to expect a robust recovery in consumer spending," the daily said.

Both the Daiwa Institute of Research and the Nomura Research Institute predicted a 1.8-percent growth for the next year while nine others forecast a growth of 0.8-1.1 percent, the daily said.

The research arm of Sumitomo Life Insurance Co. Ltd. forecast a contraction of 0.2 percent.

Daiwa expected that production would be adjusted in the April-June quarter due to a slowdown in exports but that "the correction will end in a short period of time due to increases in consumer and capital spending."

But Sumitomo said that the US economic slowdown would depress corporate earnings here with curbs on exports and consumption, according to the daily. "Capital spending will start to slip below year-before levels in the June-September quarter," Sumitomo was quoted as saying.

The 16 think tanks forecast an average 2.9-percent increase in capital spending in the next financial year, compared with an estimated 4-5 percent expansion in the current term, the daily said.

Fourteen expected consumer spending to improve in 2001-2002 but most forecast increases of around one percent, the Nihon Keizai said.

"Consumer spending will remain stagnant as workers wages struggle to grow," the Japan Research Institute said, according to the daily. "Consumers' sentiment is feared to be depressed due to stock-market debacles and corporate failures." *AFP*

More possible trouble spots ahead for Wall Street

NEW YORK—After two of the most gut-wrenching weeks in recent Wall Street history, investors are anxious to know when the stock market is going to turn around and move higher.

Given the current state of the economy, in which corporate layoffs and restructuring have replaced the rapid expansions of recent years, a comeback isn't quite so simple. The market is likely to face more vulnerable times.

"I'm not holding out hope any time soon" for a turnaround, said Gary Kaltbaum, a market technician for First Union Securities. He said stocks still are overvalued and that investors will be grappling with earnings disappointments all year.

"The Dow stocks are just now playing catch up. The voracity of selling leads me to believe that any rally will also be sellable," Kaltbaum said.

Kaltbaum was referring to the Dow Jones industrials' two-week slide that sent the blue chips into bear market territory _represented by a 20-percent decline from the index's Jan. 14, 2000, closing high of 11,722.98—during Thursday's trading. The Dow closed Friday at 9,504.78, down 1,139.84, or 10.7 percent, during the previous two weeks and 18.9 percent off its peak.

The Dow fell victim to the same investor fury that sent the Nasdaq composite index plunging more than 60 percent from its high of 5,048.62 of a year ago.

Market watchers are split about when a rebound could occur.

"The market is the best forecaster of the future," said Kaltbaum, who believes that the stock market is predicting a recession.

Other analysts forecast a recovery soon, and point to recent trading sessions in which volume has been heavy and selling has been widespread across sectors, which in the past has often signaled that the market was about to touch bottom.

"Certainly, the dumping of stocks has become indiscriminate and the general mood of the market, because of the persistent unrelenting selling, is extremely gloomy," said Alfred E. Goldman, director of market analysis for A.G. Edwards & Sons Inc. in St. Louis. "It means we are closer to a bottom."

Other analysts concur.

"We are getting very close" to bottoming out, said Brian Belski, chief fundamental market strategist for US Bancorp Piper Jaffray.

"Does this mean we are out of the woods yet?" Belski said. "No. We need to get through the next few weeks to build some credibility."

Analysts agree on two things:

1 The market must wait to see whether companies' upcoming warnings of disappointing first-quarter earnings have been factored into beaten-down stock prices. If results are worse than investors' already lowered expectations, stocks will continue downward.

1 Whether the Federal Reserve lowers interest rates before its scheduled meeting in mid-May is key to stock prices trending higher.

The Fed must "restore a sense of confidence to the business community, as well as the stock market, that they do recognize that equities are under pressure," said Alan Ackerman, executive vice president of Fahnestock & Co.

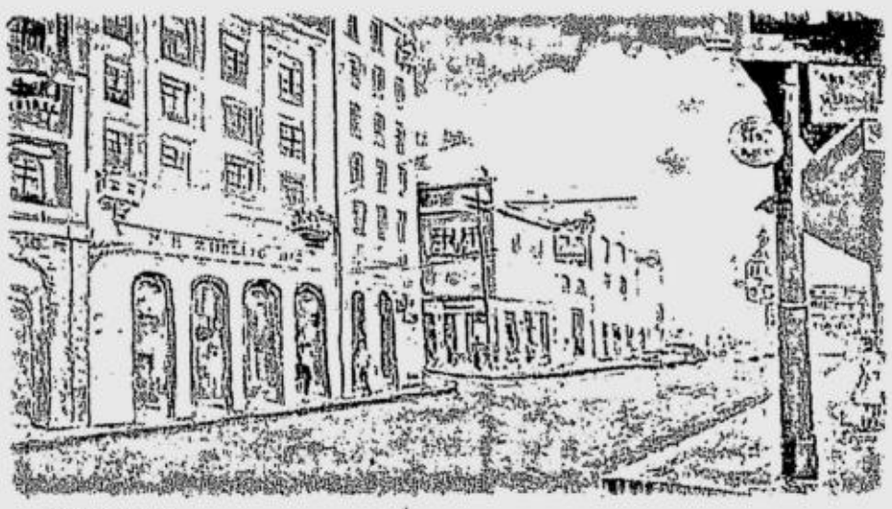
One thing the market has going for it, oddly, is that upcoming economic data, such as consumer confidence and unemployment figures, are likely to be quite weak. Such news would be viewed as positive if it prompts the Fed to lower interest rates for the fourth time this year.

"The good news for the stock market is that over the next 30 days, the macroeconomic data is going to look as bad as the earnings data has for months," said Robert J. Barbera, chief economist at Hoenig & Co. of Rye Brook, New York.

Analysts expect the New York-based Conference Board on Tuesday to report that its Consumer Confidence Index fell significantly in March to 104.1 from February's 106.8, the lowest level since June 1996.

While a weaker consumer confidence figure could encourage the Fed to lower interest rates more aggressively, some analysts caution that the economy won't immediately benefit from lower borrowing costs. They say it takes six to nine months for rate cuts to have an effect, and warn investors not to be encouraged by signs of consumers clamping down on spending.

"Earnings are not going to turn around until consumers start spending more money," said James Meyer, director of research at Janney Montgomery Scott in Philadelphia. "The market is getting too focused on dumb things. The dumb thing in this market is to say, 'Bad news is good news.' It's not." *AP*



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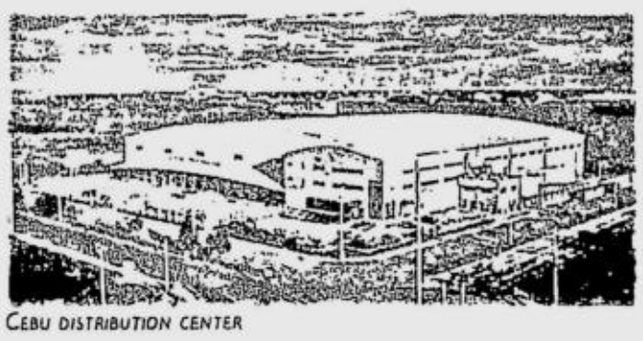

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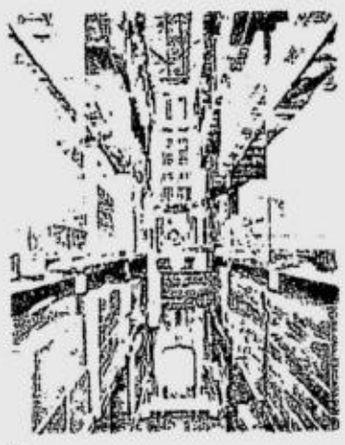

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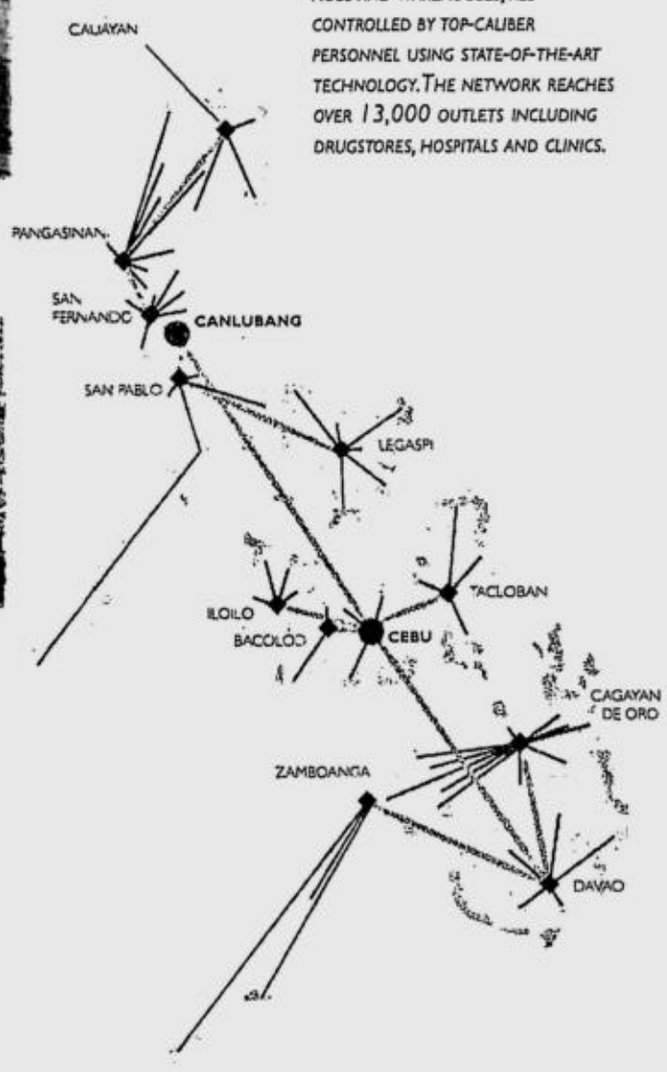

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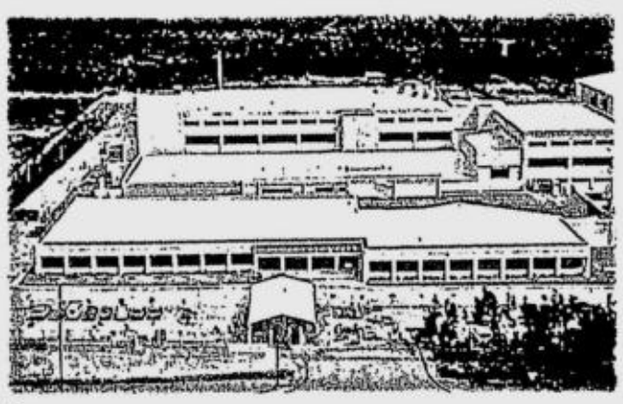

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REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Steel gets on your heads

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

THE MEN of steel in the Philippines aren't exactly mild-mannered Clark Kents-turned-Supermen, but structural designers and engineers advocating the use of steel in ceilings, roof frames, internal partitions, doors and even casements for windows. It makes heroic sense, after all, if you think of it as easing the country's dependency on fast-disappearing timber.

Pro-steel structural designers see themselves and their work as the better alternative. They say instead of adding to the environmental and ecological imbalance brought about by the cutting down of forest trees, they are slowly opening minds to the possibility of the cost-efficiency of steel.

More endangered species

Ironically, though, it seems that steel is the more endangered species in this country. The semi-government firm National Steel Corp. "died" a few years ago, preventing the Philippines from using its biggest processing facility for making steel.

The possibility of steel becoming a more economical alternative to wood isn't an extinct idea, however. Though local companies import steel's raw material from Czechoslovakia or Singapore, they are able to manufacture different light-gauge structural steel sections with their own facilities. Rapid Forming Corp., for example, has ventured into making steel doors and doorjambs.

Rapid Forming went into alternative construction technology processes and materials in the early '90s when the country's need for housing units swelled. It had experienced a deluge in demand for steel roof framing systems. It now caters to the most active developers in the Philippines. Its notable clients include Crown Asia Properties, Filinvest, Jardine Land, Ayala Land's Laguna properties, the MBVillar Group of Companies and Empire East.

RAPID Forming Corp.'s preengineered roof-framing systems for clients like Crown Asia, Filinvest and Jardine Land.

More cost-efficient

Structural designer engineer Nixon Barroga works for Rapid Forming. In an interview with the INQUIRER, he asserted that steel is more cost-efficient than wood.

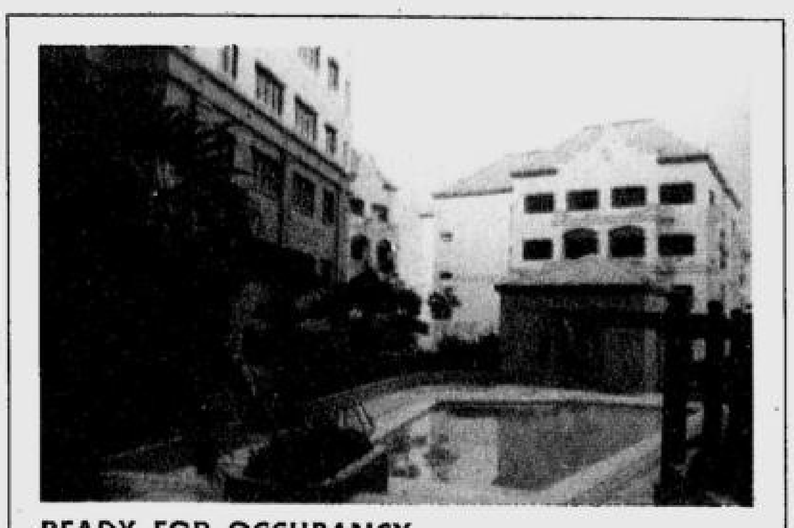
"We developed the system together with my company in 1993. Steel used in roof framing systems became widely popular, but our system design has now been made more cost-efficient than before," he claimed.

In North America, steel frames are trumpeted as one of the toughest structures, able to withstand hurricanes and even earthquakes.

Mark Stephenson, executive director of TheSteelAlliance, said in www.steelframingalliance.com that as steel is both strong and lightweight, it would be easy for builders to work on and could be engineered to better withstand hurricanes and strong earthquakes. He added that steel framing is also stronger than wood and will not splinter or crack. He further noted that steel framing is an important option for those rebuilding after a storm.

Barroga, however, said that the durability of a structure does not depend on the type of material in the construction. The quality of the structure still depends on how it was done and how one prepared the structure.

SteelAsia, another advocate of steel in the Philippines, claims to operate the only state-of-the-art rebar plant in the country. Its rolling mill was commissioned in 1996. Its projects include the Metro Manila Skyway, the PB Com Tower, the MRT depot, NAIA II, Rockwell, Rizal and Hidalgo Towers, and Philam Tower.



READY FOR OCCUPANCY

Housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. has announced that San Francisco Gardens, its mid-rise residential community on Boni Avenue in Mandaluyong City, is now ready for occupancy. Turnover of Cluster 6 and the remaining units in Cluster 1 to 5 is ongoing. The project, comprising of one-, two- and three-bedroom residences and a commercial area at the ground level of Cluster 1, has been completed on schedule.

Defensor bares housing agenda for first 100 days

THE GOVERNMENT housing sector has prepared its 8-point priority agenda for the first 100 days of the Macapagal administration, according to Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Mike Defensor.

Said Defensor: "Our agenda is anchored on the core beliefs set forth by the President in her inaugural address, particularly the challenge to win the fight against poverty. Our contribution to the antipoverty campaign is captured by our action plan that seeks to provide tenurial security for our people, accelerate implementation of housing projects, improve our systems and processes, and generate additional funds for housing."

First, the HUDCC will pursue the campaign for security of tenure together with concerned government agencies and with the support of civil society. "For the first month of the Macapagal administration," Defensor continued, "we have regularized more than 30,000 residents in Cebu, Baguio, Benguet, Iligan, Laguna and Quezon City as a result of the various proclamations signed by the President."

Second, the establishment of housing projects for low salaried employees in key urban centers nationwide will be undertaken. The implementation of sectoral, institutional, corporate, LGU and cooperative housing programs will be fast-tracked, with the support and participation of the private sector in these housing projects.

Third, cooperation with local government units and other housing stakeholders will be strengthened. "I am surprised that the past administrations have not focused on this, considering that the local government units have more than adequate resources to offer for housing, including land," Defensor observed.

Fourth, the HUDCC will finalize action plans for the flagship relocation and resettlement projects for informal settler families occupying danger areas, such as those in river banks, *esteros* and rail tracks and those situated along the right-of-way of critical government infrastructure projects. Defensor pointed out that these projects would not only result in new housing units. This is also envisioned to contribute to the government's pump-priming efforts through generation of new jobs and increased sales for construction-related industries.

Fifth, the beneficiary listing of all housing programs and projects will be completed in order to improve the targeting of beneficiaries. Sixth, red tape in the housing permits processes will be further reduced. "We are currently reviewing existing laws and presidential issuances on the processing and issuance of housing permits with a view to further reducing the number of days needed to obtain the necessary housing permits. I have already formed a task force on this," Defensor said.

Seventh, the disposition of unoccupied housing units to qualified beneficiaries through various schemes, such as straight lease, rent-to-own and outright sale, will be undertaken.

And eighth, the HUDCC will adopt innovative financial schemes to generate additional funds that can be used to support new housing programs and projects. A housing finance group within the housing sector was already constituted that is studying the options to generate funds, through securitization of existing housing mortgages of the key shelter agencies and the flotation of housing bonds.

"We are confident that the agenda would enliven the sector. While we admit there were problems in the implementation of the program in the past, it does not mean, we have to stop. We have to keep moving and make the program vibrant and dynamic," Defensor said.

Realty marketing: The Crown Asia edge

THE RECENT economic crisis has caused some concern in the real estate sector, but not for those selling properties for leading middle-income developer Crown Asia.

"Crown Asia's continuing marketing support for its network of business partners that includes brokers, managers and property consultants and its unwavering policy of not allowing its employees to compete with the sales managers in selling properties are the major factors," says Neah Alina of Asia Plus.

"Our employees do not sell our properties, we are here to give our full support for our property consultants, sales managers and business partners, especially during the time there was a perceived crisis and now that we have moved once more into a buyer's market for real estate, especially in our sector," explains Edgardo G. Santos, Crown Asia's chief operating officer.

Business partner

For the previous nine years before she established herself as a business partner for Crown Asia, Alina had always been involved in selling things—commodities, futures trading and foreign exchange. It was her first try at real estate sales and she found the job a rewarding one and five years later she is still with Crown Asia. "Every day is a learning experience. That in itself is worth it," Alina said.

Crown Asia, Alina explains, has steered itself toward a niche market that maintained its buying power despite the crises that hit country. It is a good market,

ALINA

she said, noting that even in their harder months, they are still able to sell.

"In 1997 we were doing well until 2000. But I can't really remember a time *na mahina kami*. They were more of slow months. I recall from July to December 2000 our sales were moderate but it never totally stopped," shares Alina.

Secret

Santos and Alina are one in saying that during lean months, the secret is to refocus the sales organization setup. For example, at the height of the Abu Sayyaf and the "juetengate" scandal, local investors held on to their hard-earned income because of the deterioration of the peso's buying power. Thus, they looked toward the overseas workers segment. And with the established international offices of Crown Asia, their sales were spared from the market fluctuation.

For its part, Crown Asia doubled their efforts. "We were transparent with our business partners. They see us exerting more on our marketing efforts ergo they do the same with their sales efforts," adds Santos.

Says Alina: "I think I am blessed in landing in the house-and-lot segment. Crisis or not—it is a good market. Every Filipino has that dream of having his name on a good solid ground. And Crown Asia has captured that segment and they back it up with well-developed master-planned communities."

For information on how to join Crown Asia's growing family of sales networks, call 7260083-84. Visit their website at http://www.crownasia.com.ph for more business opportunities.

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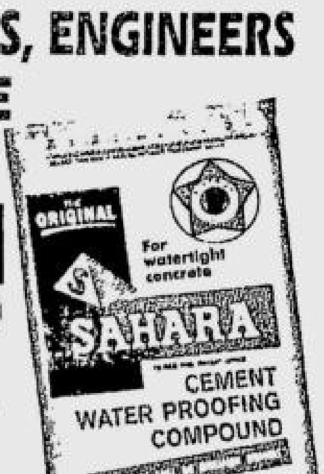

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New millennium church in Las Piñas nears completion

(First of two parts)

FROM its humble beginnings in 1985 as a makeshift chapel on its original 400-square-meter lot on the main Alabang-Zapote Road, the Church of the Parish of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ will soon be fully constructed not just to emerge as a new and bigger church for its parishioners, but likewise as a glaring and imposing religious landmark—the "Church of the New Millennium," with its unique concept and stylish structure, modern and eclectic architectural design and complete amenities and facilities never before found in any single house of worship here in the country today.

ARTIST'S perspective of the "Church of the New Millennium" in Las Piñas City

The construction of the 2,825.62-square-meter church on a sprawling 5,108-square-meter lot at 364 Real St. in Talon, Las Piñas City, is now in full swing and is almost 40 to 50 percent complete, since its groundbreaking in May 1999, financed by donations generated from the pledges both from the parishioners and friends of the parish.

With the guidance of the Stigmatines led by the parish priest at that time, the parish acquired the said lot in 1989 on Real Street with an old warehouse, which was then renovated to serve as the temporary parish church, later on fondly called the "Holy Factory" by its 30,000-strong parishioners.

Fitting tribute

The idea to construct a magnificent edifice for a church as a fitting tribute to the Almighty was however born out of a pressing need of the times and the parishioners and more so, of the people of Las Piñas City, whose phenomenal transformation from a small group of the faithful into a dynamic community of parish workers, devotees and churchgoers, created the need for the "Holy Factory" to give way to its new and modern counterpart.

Their growth was indeed phenomenal, in faith, in devotion, in size, in number and in parishioner involvement that even with a full capacity of 1,000 seats inside, people had to spill outside the church structure just to be able to attend the Holy Mass. The parishioners have never before been so involved that they bonded and willingly shared whatever resources they had to start building their new church.

With such an enthusiastic and spirited response from the community, the idea of a new church spread like wild fire and was warmly welcomed by almost everyone. Opinion surveys were conducted, people were interviewed and church organizations and movements discussed it in their meetings.

Architectural design

As an initial step toward the fulfillment of the idea, a consensus was taken to find out the people's preference for style. In 1997, the Parish Pastoral Council, then under the leadership of Italian priest Fr. Aldo D' Andria, personally commissioned young architect Joseph Javier (a parishioner who practically grew up in the parish as a youth leader and who organized the Church's "koro stigmatino") to come up with an architectural concept for the new church.

Javier, an architecture graduate from the University of the Philippines, wholeheartedly obliged and even undertook a feasibility study before he finally submitted an architectural design that meets the parish priest's specifications—that it will make the church look young and dynamic and most of all, "Filipino."

He came up with a techno design of a very interesting structure that, he explained, is reminiscent of a huge ship depicting the journey of the parish from their humble beginnings to their vision of their having a bigger home for their parishioners.

Javier's design, which he said is his personal contribution to the parish, considered all the givens and variables surrounding the creation of a new church structure such as the needs of the different users, site development and trends, present and future systems and utilities, behavioral patterns of people, zoning and the present church.

Modern features

With these considerations in mind, the new church of the Parish of the Five Wounds will include the main church with a 1,500 seating capacity, a new altar with a Risen Christ as a background, a Marian chapel, a Perpetual Adoration chapel, a main auditorium for 400 people, two memorial chapels and a columbarium for 500 crypts.

Other modern features and special amenities are two confessional rooms, a confessional garden, a narthex to serve as the lobby area of the main hall, a nursery within the main church hall, a public plaza with fountains, kiosks and benches, parking spaces for 50 to 70 vehicles, a sophisticated sound system, a passive ventilation system to lessen noise and heat, two public comfort rooms and an IBMS automatic central control system.

Flow of support

According to the new church construction committee (NCC) chair Danny Sevilla, from the time the idea of the new church was announced, there has been an endless flow of support from all over—in terms of money, materials, services and prayers.

He related how a very generous sponsor undertook the church's waterproofing and another donor committed to provide part of the steel requirements of the church. Still another benefactor promised to shoulder all of the concrete materials to be used and this is not to mention that the excavation job, which prepared the base of the new church structure, was done for free.

So far, Sevilla added that only phases one and two of the church construction projection have been finished and they are the laying of the foundation of the second-story level, and the steel works and shell framing, respectively. Phase three, which involves concrete and masonry work, is currently being undertaken, while phase four, the finishing works will be underway. *(Next week: Public support needed to finish church construction)*

Microtel to develop hotel at Sta. Rosa Business Park

MICROTEL Inns & Suites (Pilipinas) Inc., the Philippine master franchise holder of the United States-based Microtel chain of world-class economy hotels, has signed a franchise agreement with Greenfield Development Corp. to build and develop a 60-room Microtel Hotel at the Sta. Rosa Business Park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Scheduled to be ready for opening in the first quarter of next year, Microtel Sta. Rosa will be the fifth hotel in the local Microtel chain, which began in the Philippines only in December 1999. Its site on the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay Highway, near the Ford, Matsushita Electric, Toyota, Nissan and other major plants, makes it ideal for visitors to the industrial center and nearby destinations.

Microtel is known internationally for catering to value-conscious business and leisure travelers, providing most of the services of first-class hotels at rates comparable to those of independent, provincial hotels.

Charles Pereira, director for International Development of US Franchise Systems of Atlanta, Georgia, which owns the Microtel, Best Inns and Hawthorn brands, witnessed the signing of the fifth local Microtel franchise agreement and visited the ongoing Microtel hotel projects in the Philippines.

Microtel is the fastest-growing US-based hotel chain in its category, with 210 hotels operating in the United States and about 400 being developed worldwide. It has the lowest development cost in the economy segment of the international hotel industry, which it maintains with sacrificing product quality.

Microtel provides ample space for short-term or extended-stay business travelers to work comfortably, and a professional setting for small meetings. Basic amenities include a key-card lock system, beds that meet chiropractic standards, fire sprinklers, and most importantly, a convenient location.

For family and leisure travelers, the suite's living room has a sofa sleeper so that it can serve as a second bedroom.

Every room has complete toilet and bath, built-in desk and chair, remote-control television, IDD/NDD phones and a compatible port for fax and modem. Suite amenities include a wet bar, a refrigerator, a coffeemaker and a microwave oven.

Paramount Property Management Co. manages all Microtel hotels in the Philippines.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

New office complex

FORT Bonifacio Development Corp. recently held the topping-off ceremony for the HatchAsia GlobalCity Center. The HGC is the 24,000-square-meter, three-floor incubator center office complex at the Bonifacio GlobalCity's IT park. The HAGC is designed for office locators in the IT industry. The building was named after its major tenant, HatchAsia.com, the leading incubator in the country today. The new office complex expects full completion by end of May and ready for occupancy in June 2001.

Open house, family fun day

PROSPECTIVE buyers and investors will have a chance to see for themselves the existing facilities and amenities that members can enjoy at South Waters Marina Country Club and Farm in Lucena City during the grand open house and family fun day on Saturday. South Waters is a 24-hectare eco-resort destination hidden in a delta by the Tayabas Bay. Prospective share buyers may bring their families to personally experience the benefits and privileges of being a member of South Waters. For inquiries, call up Doris at 637-5063 or 637-5053.

New seaside subdivision opens in Subic

PROPERTY builder Sta. Lucia Realty & Development Inc. will open on Saturday its seaside Club Morocco Beach Resort and Residential Estates in Subic Bay, Zambales.

The 240-hectare development will contain three residential villages, a luxury clubhouse-hotel complex and a complex of vacation villas.

Sta. Lucia will inaugurate the Mediterraza residential villages with an open house event and tour of the inland home locations. The Club Morocco subdivision is nearly complete and some of the resort functions, such as the west wing of the clubhouse and the vacation villas, will be operational this summer.

The residential estate will be made up of three villages—Villas Monaco, Ibiza and Venezia—all built on rolling terrain sprawling around a Subic Bay cove. Sta. Lucia designed the estate to have the look and character of an idyllic Mediterranean town, taking advantage of the clear blue bay, the surrounding tree-covered hills and the constant South China Sea breeze to create a resort climate for the subdivision.

Sta. Lucia is building a resort clubhouse as the centerpiece for the estate. The facility will have 40 hotel rooms, fine-dining restaurant, a ballroom, gym, game room, bowling alleys, basketball and tennis courts, a pool, beach volleyball space and an aqua sports facility. Helipads were also built.

Royale Homes, the exclusive marketing arm of Club Morocco estate, will hold an open house event on Saturday. For inquiries, call up 726-4317, 726-4205 or 724-7101.

FIRST YEAR OF OPERATIONS

Rockwell Club cites gains

THE ROCKWELL Club, leisure and fitness center of Makati's premier business and residential address, reported a 123-percent increase in proprietary membership in commemorating its first year of operations. Club members, who include Rockwell Center residents and club share owners, have risen to 1,250 from 820 members when the club first opened its doors last year.

THE CLUB'S children's pool area provides a safe and refreshing swimming experience.

Anthony Cottan, The Rockwell Club general manager, says the membership number was commendable considering that the market for club shares was more cautious and other choices available. He credited the club's membership team for their efforts and noted that the amenities and distinctive service offered had helped attract membership.

"Our range of benefits has also been extended with the addition of 11 key reciprocal clubs in the region and the agreement to have playing rights at the Luisita Golf Course in Tarlac," added Cottan.

Once the facilities were fully operational, Cottan considered focusing on service for The Rockwell Club's cosmopolitan membership. "We put Shining Moments cards in the outlets for members to recognize those good actions of staff so we can share best practices and repeat them more often. On a daily basis, the staff spends about 5-10 minutes going through the key values associated with making the member's enjoyment of the club paramount," explained Cottan.

The drive for impeccable service extends from the club's two restaurants to the fitness center, dance studio, sports courts, Greek-inspired spa and salon, and even lobby, entrance where reception welcomes members and guests.

"Poolside we had to get members familiar with the unique design of the 5 in 1 pool, which has now become very popular with all ages," said Cottan. The Rockwell Club swimming pools are laid out across the residential gardens, infusing a resort-like atmosphere to the whole area.

The club's entertainment and education center for children, Rocky's, has also grown steadily with activities and classes for younger club members. Coming summer activities include a preschool project with Happy Hearts of Dasmariñas Village.

With the neighboring Power Plant mall already in full swing, Cottan has arranged for more club privileges once the six-lane bowling alley opens at the mall this year. "Members will enjoy beneficial reservation procedures," he said.

The Rockwell Club is currently slowing down on new membership sales to allow more emphasis on giving existing members ample attention and creating new services. There is now a waiting list for individual share memberships while corporate shares are still available in limited numbers.

ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE

This is the architect's perspective of the new Italianni's Bakery & Cafe that recently opened at the 2nd floor, Glorietta 4 in Makati City. Green and brown wooden tables and comfortable chairs, large mirrors, chandeliers and Italianni's trademark memorabilia like framed photographs adorning the walls are among the interior's features that lend charm and a feeling of coziness to the place. It is equipped with a small kitchen to ensure that food is served fresh and hot daily.

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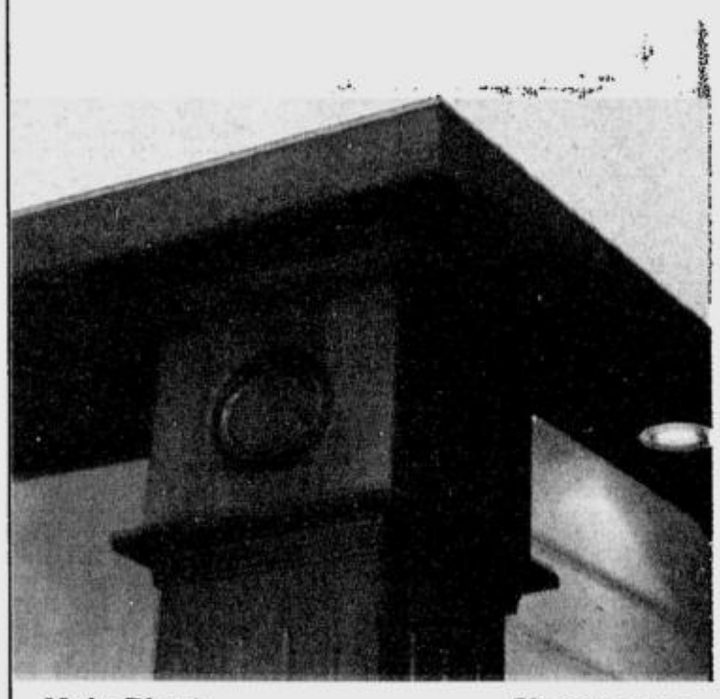

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**Nr Ateneo 900sm 5.5T /sm Nice Loc. 645-3731

Nr New York 400m² 20T Neg No Flood 6453731

QC 15th Ave 500m² 25T Neg Facing East 6453731

**Scout Cor LOT w/ Fence 800m² 231/m² 9283267

Sct. Cor Lot 1481-114621

TIERRA PURA LOTS 928-3267 • 141-210187

Sikatuna V 600m² 12M 915-5177 • 0917-5325440

Sta Mesa Hts 1481-114621

*Teachers VII 400@15T/m² 9139692/ 09193672327

Cainta Vacant Lot 855sm Semi Industrial 6559393

Kingsville Royale
180sqm P3300 9488240

TAYTAY 1H 3.2/m² 6453731

Taytay 1H Tikling 3.3/2 Nice Flat w'Road 6453731

LOT

Village East Binangonan 203m² cor. 5313742

SAN JUAN

** N. Domingo 300sm No Flood 20T/sm 6453731

PROVINCIAL

** Bat 4.6H 600sm 1Km Fr. Calabarzon HW 645-3731

**Pampanga 27H Alng Mc Arthur H-way 220/m² 681-2457

Tagaytay Country Homes I 135m² 3,200/m² 928-3267

Baguio Subd. LOT w/Pine Trees Tel. 5313742

Tagaytay Overlooking 679 Vac Lot Tel. 928-1469

553m² TAGAYTAY V-LOT TEL.# 928-1469

CALAMBA HILLS SUB-DIV. MAYAPA, CALAMBA, LAGUNA CORNER LOT 311m² NEAR SCHOOL 09192800275

Colbella Homes Tanauan Batangas 3Lots 5313742

Fort Magsaysay 18Has Resd'l P450m² 5313742

Grand Victoria N. Ecija 4 Lots 5313742

LA7049m² Commercial Lot Malinta Bul Tel. 928-1469

Malinta Bul 7049m² VLot Along Hiway Tel 453-4877

Puerto Princesa good 4 fstfood bank 0917-3711210

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•Tiaong Quezon 3.6Hec• 600/m² Town Hway 7215226

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VL 551m² P3.5M Pandayan Meycauyan • 911-7940

Prto Princesa Rushl Com'l Lots 048-4342200/4332531

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**Caloocan GF 360m² 2Sty Use 3Sty Whse 9283267

MAKATI

**Rockwell 3 Units 2Brs Fast Selling 671-4421

1BR Furn Salcedo Village @ P3.5M • 911-7940

1BR Nobel Plaza FA45m² @P3.5M Makati 911-7940

•Rushl Le Domain 2BR 6M •90m² 4121825/ 150341394

Asia Tower Frt Greenbelt Studio FF P3.0M 534-7949

The Peak Salcedo FA60m² 1Bed Fully Furn 534-7949

Prince Plaza FA32m² SP Studio P2M Only 534-7949

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RushlMegaPlaza 48.50sqm 1br 2.7MNeg 09178143792

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MANDALUYONG

Sedar-Ortigas 5.2M 3br/3tb Rushl142sqm 09178143792

Various Wack-Wack Condo Lee Gardens 534-6610 Jojo

WACKWACK THomes 93 sqm 2BR 3.2M 531-2021 • 0917-3955738

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PASIG

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**Nr C5 FA62 3Br 2Tb 1.7o Lmt 5Yrs 2 Pay 645-3731

**Nr C5 Res/Com TH 6M 357FA 156 O Int 5Y 645-3731

**OFF Condo Prestige Twr Emerald 4M 141-259275

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New Mla Nr St Lukes 9M 3Sty 4br 2cg New 4134411

Nr Ateneo LA72 FA149 3br 2tb Nr Nice 6453731

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**Scout Townhse 115m² LOT 280m² 3Sty 5M Nice 9283267

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Montalban 350T 913-0393

New 4BR 3T&B Marble Flr LA101m² FA160m² Sale P1.4M V.East 9137892 / 141-247311

SAN JUAN

Addin Hills Nr Shaw 114m² 2BR 3TB Mds Rm 2Tels New Prkng P3.4M 726-1221

Annapolis Greenhills 2-3 BR 7-8M 9283267

**Annapolis Greenhills Condo 2-3Br 7-8M 9283267

Annapolis Greenhills 3BR Condo w/View 928-3267

Nr G'Hills LA67 FA200 3br 7M 2Cg Nice 6453731

One Beverly FA193m² 3BR 3TB P8.7M • 911-7940

PROVINCIAL

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**Sct Madrinan Twnhse 7.4M 3Stry 2Pkg 230m² 5221651

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CONDO/TWNHSE

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AUCTION SALE

FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC. 1137 P. GIL ST. PACO MLA. Will sell all expired pledges left during the months of August and September 2000 on April 8, 2001, Sunday at 10:00 a.m. *Sons of J. Lanuza Auctioneer*

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Republic of the Philippines
SOUTHERN LEYTE STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Sogod, Southern Leyte

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND BIDS FOR THE PROPOSED HIRING OF SECURITY GUARDS OF SOUTHERN LEYTE STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Southern Leyte State College of Science and Technology, Sogod, Southern Leyte is in need of eight (8) Security Guards to be assigned in the College Campus.

Interested bidders are requested to submit sealed bids at the SLSCST's Administration Office together with unexpired license as Security Agency.

Deadline for Submission of requirement and bid proposals will be on **May 3, 2001** at 4:00 PM at the Administration Office or at the Office of the College President. Pre-bidding conference and opening of the bids will be on **May 10, 2001** at 10:00 AM at the SLSCST Conference Hall.

SLSCST reserves the right to waive any formality or to reject or all bids received without any reason.

Address all communications to:

Mr. Valerio B. Cabalo, Chairman, Committee on Pre-Bids and Awards, Southern Leyte State College of Science and Technology, Sogod, Southern Leyte.

(Sgd.) **LEONARDO L. MANALO**
President

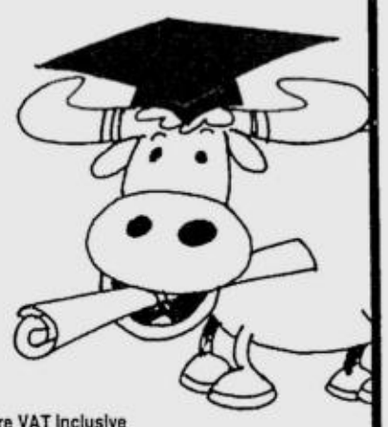
(PDI -- March 25, 27 & 30, 2001)

ERRATUM

In the ad of **Social Security System re: Invitation to Bid** published in this paper **March 24, 2001**, the minimum bid of **Item no. 28** was inadvertently printed as P12,500.00 instead of **P122,500.00.**

Our apologies.

SUCCESS!



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INQUIRER RiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

'Food' money

Q. Where did the word 'bribe' come from?

A. Many English words that deal with companionship are rooted in the sharing of food. One such word is *bribe*, which, unlike most of the others, went from 'good' to 'bad.' It derives from the Old French *briber*, meaning ' a morsel of bread given to beggars.' From a piece of bread, *bribe* evolved into begging, then living by beggary, then theft, and finally blackmail and *bribery* is the modern sense.

First of All. The first sliced bread was the invention of a jewelry store owner named Otto Frederick Rohwedder, who started working on a slicing machine in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1912. However, a disastrous fire destroyed his prototype device and all his tools and equipment. In 1922, having secured financial backing, he resumed work on his machine, persevering in the face of discouragement from bakery traders who asserted that a sliced piece of bread would dry out too fast. In order to hold the slices together, Rohwedder designed a machine to impale them on sterile hat pins, but the pins invariably fell out. His next idea was to pack the slices in shallow boxes lined with greaseproof paper. Eventually he hit on the solution that was to make sliced bread a success: a machine which cut the bread and then sealed it in a wrapper. This was in January 1928, by which time he had moved to Battle Creek, Michigan and it was here in May of that year sliced bread first reached the dining table when a local bakery ordered one of Rohwedder's machines and started regular production.

Past forward. This day in 1977: The worst accident in aviation history shocked the world when two Jumbo jets collided and caught fire on the runway of Los Rodeos Airport at Tenerife in the Canary Islands. The disaster, which claimed 583 lives, happened when a Pan Am 747 turned onto the runway where a KLM 747 was about to take off. Incorrect control-tower instructions were blamed for the accident.

WORD WATCH

Pandeleche : from the Spanish *pan* ('bread') + *de* ('from') + *leche* ('milk')

PDI - - March 27, 2001

OBITUARIES

For Inquiries, call 897-2535

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Matthew 10:39

EUFROCINA HIDALGO MACASIEB

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 20, 2001 at the age of 86.

Her loving husband **Meliton Sr.** (†); children **Tony** (†) and **Liza** (†), **Sergio** and **Edith**, **Nandy**, **Dick**, **Roland** and **Tess**, **Lito** and **Lita**, **Ben** and **Jane** and daughter **Vilma** and **Dennis** (†); together with grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapel starting March 29, 2001.

Interment will be on March 31, 2001 at the Holy Cross, San Bartolome, Quezon City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Ex-Mayor Dr. Francisco Cañares Mogueis, Jr.

of San Fernando, Masbate

who peacefully joined his Creator on February 22, 2001.

wish to thank all of you who, by the way of your presence, prayers, thoughts and flowers offered us solace and comfort. We also thank you for joining us in remembering him, who in so many ways, have touched our lives forever.

God Bless You!

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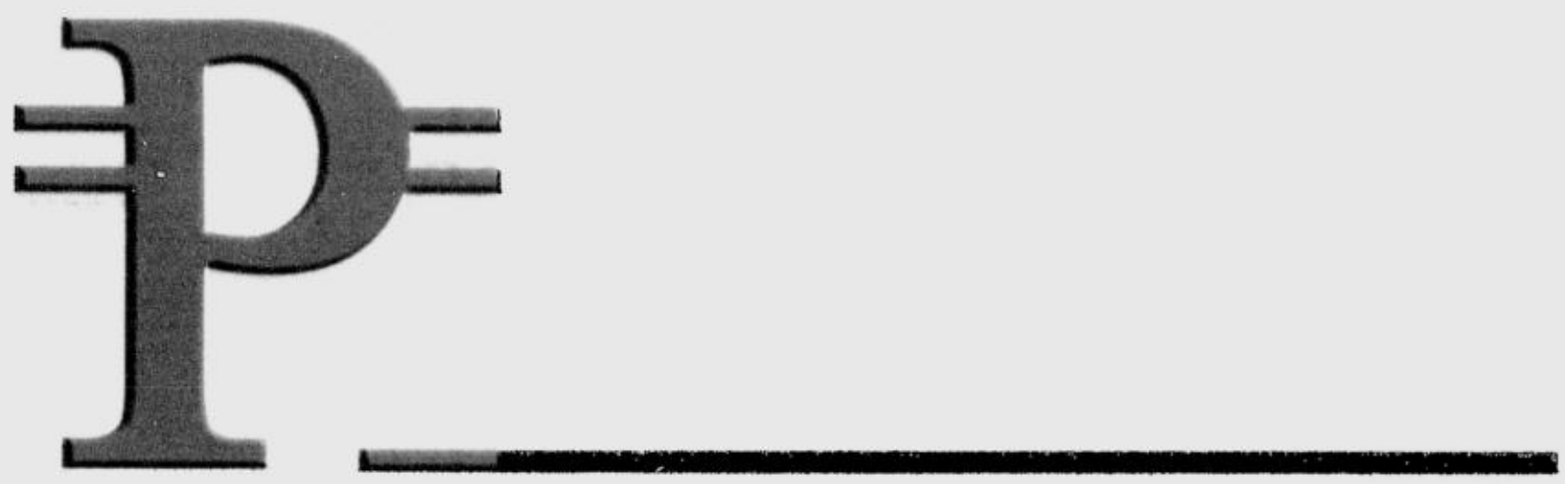

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Subic presents the art of kicking heels

The 2nd National Dancesport Competition was a test of endurance and grace under pressure for 50 pairs

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA
PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

THE SCORE is now 2-0—still in favor of Michael Mendoza and Belinda Adora.

The dancing duo (couple 174) recently bested eight other pairs, including archrivals Bong Marquez and Edna Ledesma (couple 173), clinching the top spot in the amateur Latin division of the 2nd National Dancesport Quarterly Ranking and Competition at the George Dewey Convention Center in Subic.

Their much-awaited rematch has again resulted in the defeat of Bong and Edna, who had to settle for silver. The rival pairs last saw action in October, after Belinda debuted with a younger and less-experienced dance partner in the person of Michael. A torn tendon sidelined her longtime collaborator John Co.

Muscle-bound Belinda again exuded strength and agility on the dance floor (that velvet black number with fringes and rhinestones in the right places fits her perfectly), but it was fresh-faced Michael who proved to be a revelation this time around.

Yes, we never doubted Michael's dancing prowess from the start, but he seemed tentative and unsure of himself then beside a more seasoned Belinda. Well, not this time. He was able to hold his own and keep in step with his partner from start to finish. And the judges agreed unanimously.

It marked the first time Dancesport of the Philippines officials, led by president and undisputed "lambada queen" Becky Garcia, were able to stage the contest in the former American naval base. A similar competition was held last year in Cebu.

The Philippines, through Dancesport, is poised to host the Asia-Pacific ballroom championship later this year. That's quite a tall order. An estimated P3.5 million is required to stage such an international event.

What's more, the country is up against the likes of Australia and other developed nations within the region. Apart from corporate sponsors, Dancesport officials plan to tap the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Philippine Sports Commission for funds. Garcia and company have set their sights on Subic.

"Not only will it generate interest in the sport," says Dancesport VP Jun Herrera. "The event will project a positive image of the country, especially Subic, to the rest of the world. After what we've been through recently, we certainly need all the good publicity we could get."

Subic, with its world-class facilities and ample security, seems up to the task. But the convention's toilet and air-conditioning system could use some improvement. Both athletes and spectators kept fanning themselves in the heat of the contest. Long lines led to the men's room, located some meters from the venue, with a lone functioning toilet bowl.

The free port, through the efforts of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair Felicito Payumo, partly sponsored the event. Payumo and his wife Daisy, herself a ballroom enthusiast, graced the afternoon affair.

Ballroom dance's ironies

Over 50 pairs competed in various divisions, including pre-am Latin, pro-am Latin, amateur standard, pre-am standard and pro-am standard. The contest was the first of three events to determine the top two pairs in each division, who'll participate in regional and international dance tilts later this year.

"They have to make a good showing here and in succeeding events," Herrera explains. "They can't afford to ignore this and try to make good in the finals this October. We will add their scores and compute the average to come up with the country's best."

The annual outing also lured the best and perhaps youngest dancers in the country. As usual, ballroom fans welcomed the much-needed breather from "junior" and "juvenile" participants after having endured a series of heated showdowns among jaded adult rivals. Child's play extended to the makeshift dance floor as young pairs pranced with such carefree abandon.

Either the economic slump is starting to dampen the ballroom scene or the sport is beginning to lose its grip on generous donors. This could be gleaned from the decline in the number of competitors by half compared to last October's edition. Only 47 out of more than a hundred dance pairs had bothered to join this time.

You see, not even the good money most competitors earn as dance instructors is enough to finance their need for expensive foreign coaches, outlandish costumes and dance workshops here and abroad. They rely heavily on financial support from sponsors to excel in the sport.

Trouble is, not too many sponsors are willing to give even a single cent to pairs with no proven track records. And how can they compete if they don't have ample and costly training from the best? Life's full of ironies, even in the rarefied world of ballroom dancing.

From an all-time high of 54 pairs last year, for instance, only two Cebuano couples showed up. Cebu-based champions, led by siblings Genevieve and Charlie Camacho, were notice-

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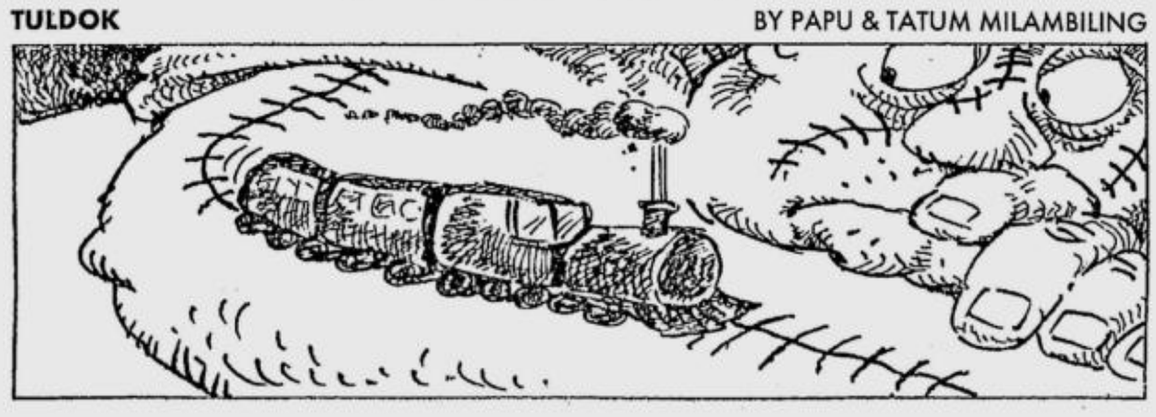


HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mariah Carey, Bart Conner, Michael York, David Janssen, Sarah Vaughan,
Happy Birthday: You have everything in order and know exactly what must be done to reach your goals. Discipline will help you conquer tasks and turn ideas into the real deal. With a strategy in place, you won't second-guess yourself. Your intuition and insight will lead you down the right path. Your belief in your accomplishments will be your driving force. Your numbers: 19, 23, 26, 32, 35, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your ability to make extra money will help pay unexpected bills. Changes in your position may lead you down new avenues that will be more profitable than working for others.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't disagree with loved ones if you want to keep the peace. You would be wise to focus on your hobbies or children and avoid the trivial differences that you may be experiencing with your mate.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Start making changes to your home. You can call in a painter or just move things around. Expand your circle of friends by joining new clubs or groups.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Getting involved in worthwhile groups will lead to interesting new friendships and partnerships. Your congeniality will be sure to bring you greater popularity.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Concentrate on professional gains. You can dazzle colleagues and employers with your insight. You will do extremely well if you go for interviews. The time to make a move is now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will have the best of both worlds if you mix business with pleasure. Look into different cultures if you wish to stimulate your creative endeavors. You should try to change your image.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Check out the real estate market. You can buy or sell if you're so inclined. Make a move if you aren't happy with your emotional situation. A change will help turn your life around.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Plan something special. A night out on the town or some tender loving care in the warmth of your own home may just be the ticket to putting the spark back into your relationship.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will be highly successful at work. Voice your opinions and roll up your shirtsleeves and help those who work under you. You will meet your deadline and gain respect.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your competitive nature will lead you to the winner's circle. You can make professional gains if you socialize with clients. Tickets for a sports event will come in handy.

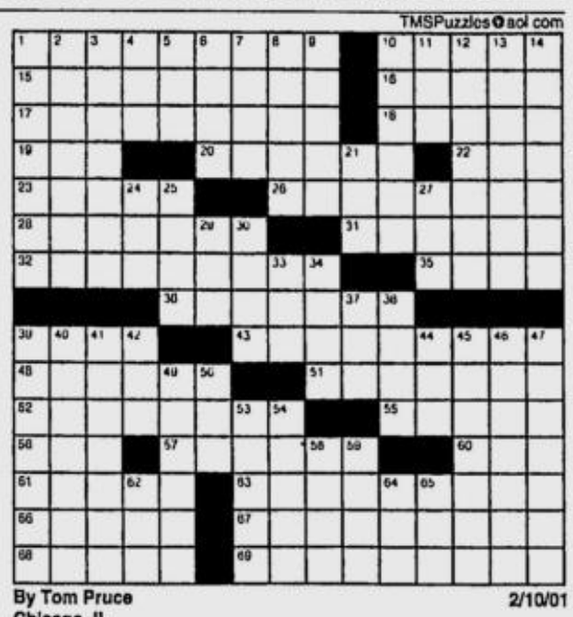
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You can make changes in your home if you aren't afraid to face opposition from others. Try not to let these alterations cost too much.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pleasure trips or quality time with your lover should be in your plans. Your home environment will stabilize. Look into making changes that will please everyone.

Birthday Baby: You have everything necessary to follow your dreams. You are engaging, entertaining, thoughtful, practical and sound. You have the curiosity, energy and staying power to see anything you start to completion.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

2/10/01

ACROSS
1 Story
10 Author of "Psycho"
15 Three-digit telephone numbers
16 __ Ingalls Wilder
17 Nags
18 Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"
19 Scoffer's comment
20 Robert and Kim
22 How __ your day?
23 Makes an effort
26 Canines
28 Kingdom founded by St. Stephen
31 Attack verbally
32 Census classifications
35 Beseech
36 By my lowest estimation
39 Fisherman's rod
43 Avidity
48 Proverbs
51 Candidate for cement boots
52 Ornamental shrub with red flowers
55 Resided
56 "__ In the Family"
57 Cultural subdivisions
60 Fido's doc
61 Home of the Heat
63 Bile duct obstruction
66 Fall bloomer
67 Freedom from doubt
68 Ray
69 Stirs up again

DOWN
1 Flammable solvent
2 Small carpet
3 Polish anew
4 Squealer
5 Top shot
6 Ripped
7 Graphic beginning?
8 Vitality
9 Short literary composition
10 Criticizes severely
11 __ Cruces, NM
12 Last longer
13 Land of Zagreb
14 Roughly
21 New Zealand parrot
24 Easter item
25 Poet Teasdale
27 Mind-reading letters
29 Balderdash!
30 Kind of log
33 Little legume
34 Becomes slack
37 Solidify
38 Walked (on)
39 Bedroom duds
40 Concubine in a harem
41 Colorado peak
42 Self-esteem
44 Forthwith
45 Airplane controllers
46 Quiet!
47 Sofas
49 Whole
50 Mister
53 Stogie or cheroot
54 Humiliate
58 "Born Free" lioness
59 Disparaging remark
62 Ran into
64 Letters of a Broadway hit
65 Greek letter

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

L	A	D	D		P	E	A	L	S		E	D	G	Y
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2/10/01

The art of kicking heels goes to Subic

(From page C1)

ably absent. The pair did poorly last October, landing only sixth in the finals. They scored an upset several months earlier by unseating Bong and Edna from the top spot.

"I don't believe the Cebuanos staged a boycott," says Herrera. "Expensive air fares and the dwindling number of sponsors certainly had a lot to do with it [their no-show]."

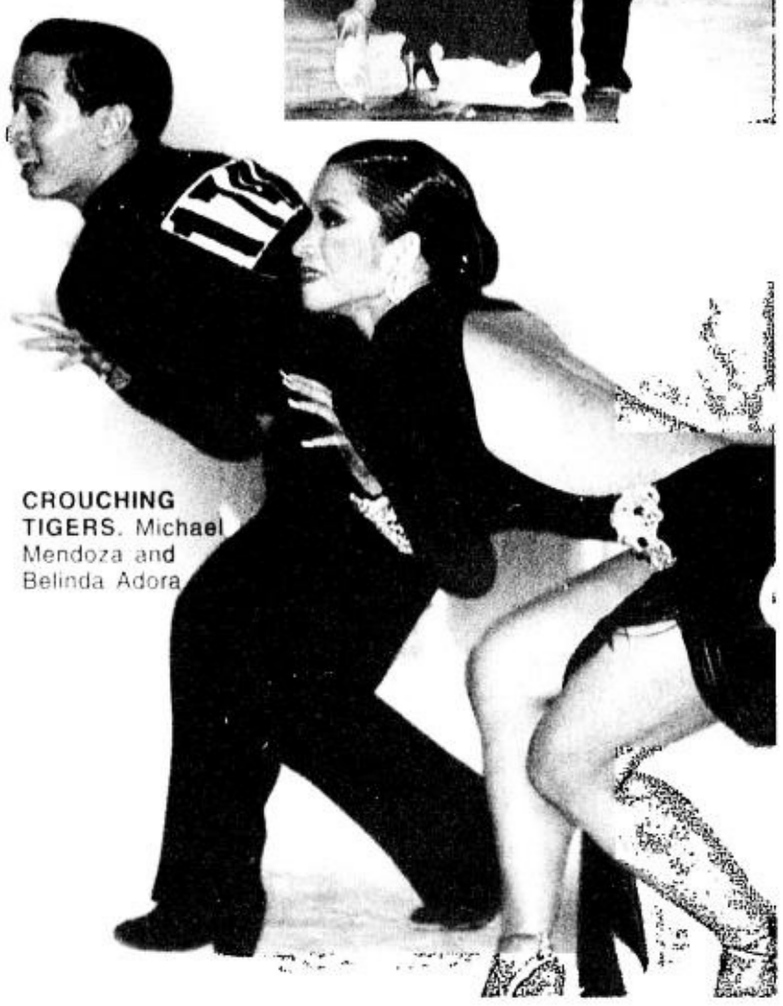
With the absence of Cebu's best pair, all eyes were focused on couples 173 and 174 as they tried to outshine one another in the presence of foreign adjudicators Scott Todd of Great Britain, Allan Yeh of Taiwan and Sky Choi of China.

As usual, both camps' supporters came in full force to cheer for their respective bets. Savannah Moon regulars, led by owners Jocelyn Poon and Ruby Co, rooted for Michael and Belinda. A smaller group led by Marvie Cojuangco Yulo also boosted Bong and Edna's spirits.

The tilt was also a test of endurance as well as grace under pressure.

DANCE TO THE FINISH. Couples 174 and 173 in fighting form

GLAM EVENT. Amateur standard champions Edgar Borromeo and Dulce Yango



CROUCHING TIGERS. Michael Mendoza and Belinda Adora

World-class performers

Competing couples, dressed in costumes of their choice, came out several times during the day to interpret a particular dance simultaneously and, hopefully, get the judges' attention for the right reasons.

As the day progressed, dancers were slowly whittled down until only the top six pairs in each category remained. They then did their routines from the top. Although competitors in the other divisions probably put in as much time and dedication as their colleagues in the amateur Latin category, the latter is arguably the most-watched event in every ballroom tilt, bringing in the crowd and generating publicity and controversy for the sport.

Dancers, like spoiled divas, are capable of throwing a fit or giving each other the cold shoulder if they happen to disagree with the results. No such thing happened this time.

So how did judges filled their respective scorecards?

"The boy [Michael] has a good understanding of body line and posture," says Todd. "The girl [Belinda] is very flexible, and she used this to her advantage. It allowed her to do moves that the others couldn't."

It was a very close fight, says Todd, especially during the finals when couple 173 made a mad dash to the finish. The third placers didn't even come close.

CHILD'S PLAY. Juvenile Latin dancers Russel Naval and Mae Valdez

Pair 174 looked more fluid and at ease on the dance floor compared to their fallen rivals. In Todd's book, Michael and Belinda topped all the dances, except the cha-cha-cha, which went to Bong and Edna.

"Both pairs are very natural dancers," adds Yeh, "but pair 174 was more clear and rhythmic in their delivery. If you asked me, they won first place in all the dances."

Choi picked pair 174 in four dances: cha-cha-cha, samba, jive and paso doble. Pair 173 ran away in the rumba.

Surprisingly, Bong and Edna seemed to be doing better on the world stage. The two are currently ranked third and fourth in Asia and the Asia-Pacific, respectively. Michael and Belinda, now the pair to beat, have yet to crack the region's top 10.

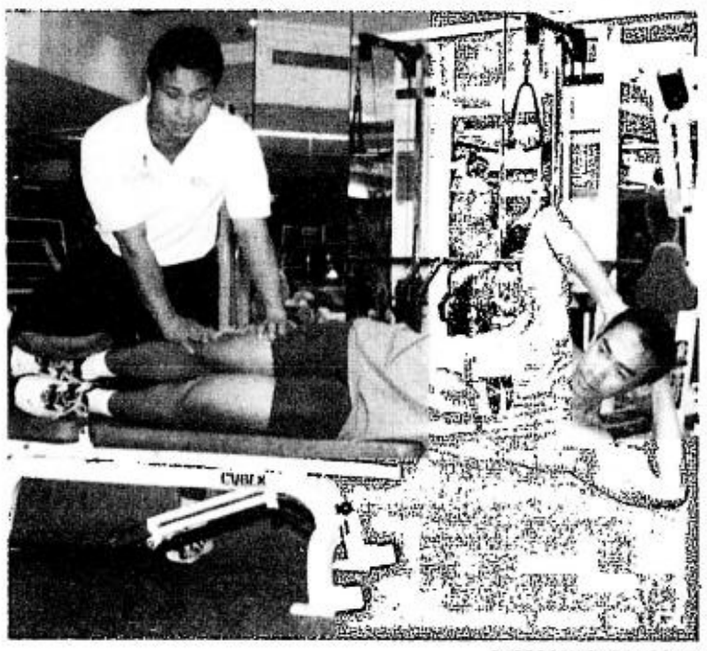
"Maybe they're [Bong and Edna] more relaxed abroad," Garcia opines. "I can understand how they feel because there's tremendous pressure here to excel. They probably need to loosen up."

But the current 2-0 equation is bound to change with the entry of a fully healed John Co and a surprise partner. His doctor has reportedly given the country's former top male dancer the go signal to join the fray. This early, John has intimated to a dancesport official his intentions to stage a comeback this June.

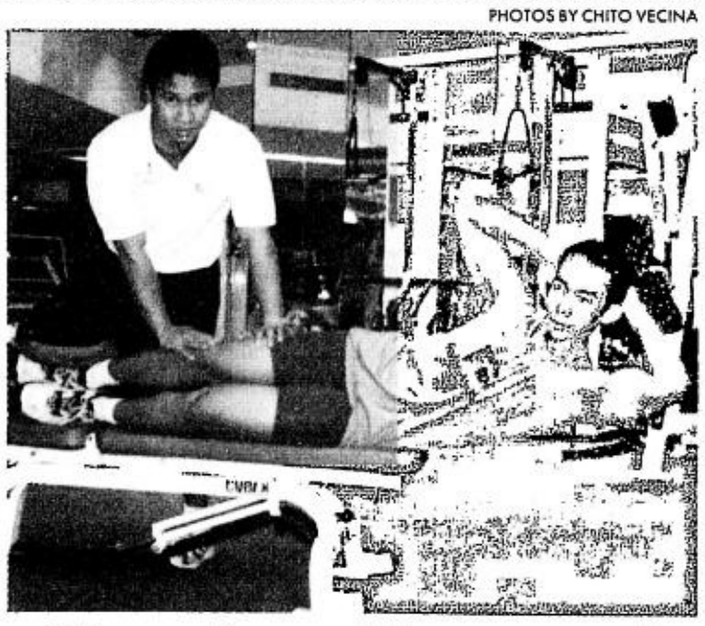
A three-cornered fight for dancesport supremacy? Hmmm, the ballroom air thickens.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA



Hanging side crunch on bench

WORKS the oblique muscles of the abdominal wall. These muscles criss-cross your waist in two opposing layers.

Equipment:
Gym bench and an exercise buddy to hold your legs.

Exercise technique:
1. Lie sideways on a gym bench with your upper body hanging off the end. Place a hand on the floor to get yourself into position.
2. Have an exercise buddy hold your legs down as you keep your upper body in a straight line with the bench and your hands behind your head.
3. Curl sideways in a slow and controlled manner.
4. Return slowly to the starting position.
5. Do the desired number of repetitions then do the other side.

Performance tips:
1. Keep your knees bent and your legs stacked one on top of the other.
2. Make sure that your waist is free to curl sideways by placing your hip at the edge of the end of the bench.
3. Focus on contracting your oblique muscles (visualize bringing the bottom of your ribcage to meet the top of your hip bone) to start the sideways crunch rather than jerking your head and shoulders.
4. Needless to say, this is an advanced exercise that is not appropriate for beginner exercisers.

Repetitions:
Do 10 to 12 slow repetitions on each side. Rest. Do one more set if you want to.

Hidden calories in coffee

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

FROM A READER:

"I've been regularly working out the past years. I have also been involved in some physical sports like jogging, basketball, biking and golf. However, when I turned 30 last year, I noticed that I have been having a hard time controlling my weight. I often feel heavy especially on my belly. I used to have *pan de sal* abs just a year ago! I've given up soft drinks instead of coffee. I can't start and live my day without a café Americano. Please write about the effects of coffee in relation to weight loss."

In terms of trying to lose weight, giving up soft drinks instead of coffee is a smart move since soft drinks contain about 150 calories for 12 ounces while the same amount of black coffee (no sugar added) contains practically zero calories. However, coffee calories can easily rise up to 340 calories if we are talking about a "tall" (12-ounce) caffé mocha with whole milk and whipped cream. That's like having a slice of chocolate cake or a cheeseburger in a coffee cup!

Some people don't realize how many extra calories they are taking when they have their daily fix of specialty coffee. I have a client who has maintained her weight for many years with sensible eating habits and regular exercise. Recently, she complained that she was putting on weight and she couldn't figure out why. After a little investigating, it was easy to see where the pounds were coming from. A few months ago, she had discovered the joys of a mocha frappuccino. She was consuming an extra 230 calories at least five times a week. It's no wonder that she had gained some extra weight. She has since shifted to a nonfat cappuccino (80 calories) and does an extra five to 10 minutes of exercise to make up for the extra calories. She still has her beloved mocha frappuccino but only once in a while.

Any kind of coffee, as long as it is "naked" without any sugar or milk added, contains almost no calories. It's what you start adding to the coffee that makes it "fattening." If you are adding only a teaspoon of sugar and creamer and you only take one cup of coffee a day, that's nothing to be worried about. However, if you are adding several teaspoons and you are taking several cups of coffee daily, then the calories start adding up, too. Specialty coffees are worse. However, it doesn't mean that you have to forego your favorite cup of java. You simply need to make some modifications like asking for nonfat milk instead of whole milk. Just say no to the whipped cream and the chocolate syrup or at least ask the people at your local coffee shop to cut it in half. Here's the lowdown on your favorite coffee concoctions courtesy of the Starbucks Coffee Company.

Caffe Mocha (nonfat milk)	
with whipped cream	260
without whipped cream	140
Caffe Mocha (low-fat milk)	
with whipped cream	300
without whipped cream	170
Caffé Mocha (whole milk)	
with whipped cream	340
without whipped cream	190
Caffe Latte	
nonfat milk	110
low-fat milk	140
whole milk	180
Cappuccino	
nonfat milk	80
low-fat milk	110
whole milk	140
Frappuccino	200
Mocha Frappuccino	230
Rhumba Frappuccino	240

Currently, the consensus is that caffeine in moderation is okay if you are a healthy adult. However, there are some people with special conditions who should not take it. These are pregnant women and people with hypertension, anxiety or sleep disorders, heart arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythm), heartburn and ulcers. Coffee can also aggravate premenstrual syndrome and menopausal symptoms.

Coffee before exercise

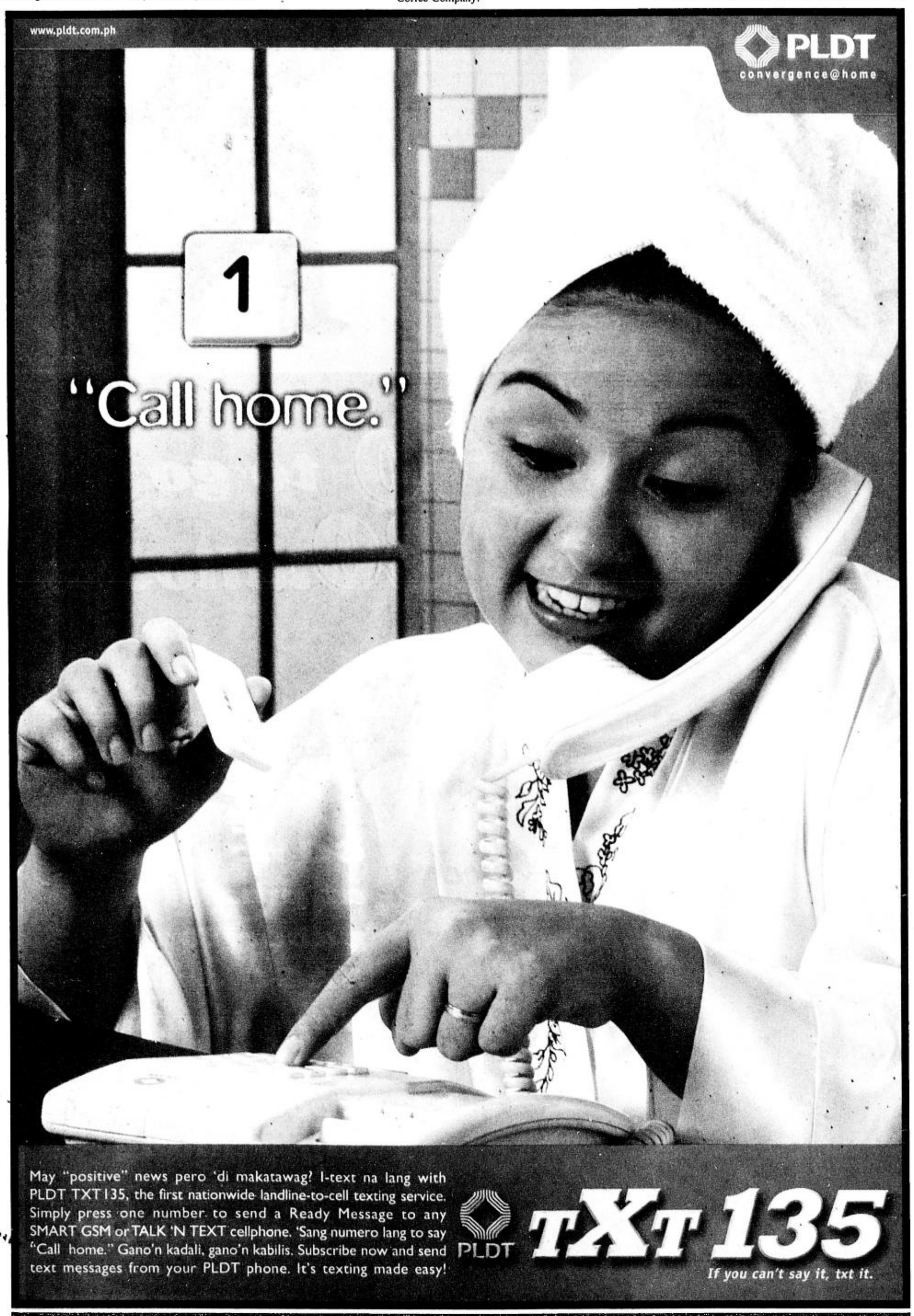
Some exercisers asked me if it is safe for them to drink coffee before working out. Things to be concerned about are the effect on blood pressure and dehydration. According to researchers at Ball State University, exercise naturally raises your systolic blood pressure (the higher number) by about 10 to 20 points. If you take coffee before exercising, blood pressure will rise by another seven to eight points. If you have normal blood pressure, this shouldn't be any cause for alarm. But if you have hypertension, diabetes, or heart disease, this might push you into dangerous levels. Meanwhile, researchers at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center warn that healthy people who have a family history of high blood pressure should avoid coffee (or any other source of caffeine like cola drinks) at least two hours before a workout because they are sensitive to anything that can cause a rise in blood pressure.

Coffee is a diuretic meaning it speeds fluid loss from your body. Therefore, it is not the ideal drink before exercise. But this doesn't mean you can't have a cup of coffee before you exercise if you drink two cups of water an hour beforehand (you should do this even if you don't drink coffee). Scientists have found that you will lose 50 percent of the fluid in a cup of coffee after a couple of hours but you also lose 35 percent when you drink water. In short, a portion of any fluid you drink will become urine. That's precisely why you need to drink at least eight glasses of water a day to replenish what you lose when you urinate. So coffee is not as dehydrating as once was thought.

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines will hold a Basic Instructor Course in Davao City on April 6 and 7. There will also be a Davao Fitness Workshop that is open to the public on April 9. For more details, call Tina Lorenzana at 082-222-4207.

The Sports Medicine Association of the Philippines (SMAP) will hold its 10th annual convention on April 28 at the Manila Midtown Hotel. The theme is "Promoting Healthy Lifestyle for the Older Adult." For more details, call the SMAP Secretariat at 521-9123, 303-1142 or e-mail sportsmedphil @yahoo.com.

For past articles or exercises, visit www.tinajuanfitness.com



IT'S SO EASY TO SEND A READY MESSAGE:
1. Dial 135 and the cellphone number, then Press 2.
2. At the voice prompt, select your Ready Message.
   - Press 1 for "Call home"
   - Press 2 for "Take care"
   - Press 3 for "Have a nice day"
   - Press 4 for "I love you"
   - Press 5 for "Happy Birthday"
   - Press 6 for "Please come home early"
   - Press 7 for "Please don't forget my bilin! Thanks."
   - Press 8 for "Sorry, I'll be late"
   - Press 9 for "Sorry, I can't make it"
   - Press 10 for "Don't worry, everything will be okay"
3. Enter sender's name or send right away. Voice prompt will confirm if message is sent.

YOU MAY ALSO SEND THE MESSAGE OF THE WEEK:
1. Dial 135 and enter the 11-digit SMART GSM or TALK 'n TEXT cell-number.
2. At the voice prompt, press 3 to listen to the Message of the Week.
3. The voice prompt will then ask you to enter the sender's name or send the message right away.
4. Afterwhich, the voice prompt will confirm whether or not the message has been sent successfully.

FOR INQUIRIES, CALL 171

St. Benedict against evil

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

READER Jay Mathew L. Mariano Sr. of Cagayan de Oro City wrote to question the power of efficacy of the St. Benedict medal to protect us from evil spirits. "Isn't faith in God enough?" he asked.

You're quite right, but the St. Benedict medal is the only existing medal that has been recognized by the Church to protect us from demonic possession.

Origin and history

"St. Benedict, patriarch of Western monasticism, was the founder of the religious order that bears his name, i.e. The Order of St. Benedict (OSB). He was born in Nursia, Italy in 480 and died in 547. As the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was the chief object of devotion among the early Christians, so it was also with St. Benedict. It was this devotion to the Cross, the sign of our redemption, that gave rise to the Medal of St. Benedict; for devotion to the Medal of St. Benedict is, above all, devotion to the sign of our Salvation.

"The saint often employed the sign of the cross to work miracles and to overcome the devil and his temptations. Hence, from the earliest centuries after his death, he is represented bearing the Cross of Christ and the Holy Rule.

"In 1647 in the Monastery of Mettan, Bavaria, an old manuscript dating back to the year 1415 was discovered explaining the letters inscribed on the medal, which had been forgotten in the course of time. Its discovery gave further incentive to its use and devotion, which spread all over Europe. Finally in 1741, Pope Benedict XIV, moved by the many favors and miracles which God had shown through the medal, solemnly approved it and enriched it with numerous indulgences.

"The solitary effects of the medal are produced through the passion of our Lord, the merits and intercession of St. Benedict and the blessing of the Church. In the blessing, God is implored to preserve those who wear the medal from all the snares and temptations of the devil to protect them from lightning and tempests, from pestilence, sickness and poisons.

"No special way of carrying or applying the medal is prescribed. It may be worn around the neck, attached to the scapular or the rosary, or otherwise carried about one's person. It may be dipped into the water or medicine to be given to the sick, or it may be applied to their wounds.

"Often, it is placed in foundation of houses, hung over the door or on the walls of dwelling places, stables, barns or attached to automobile to call down God's blessing and His protection. Also, no particular prayer is prescribed, as the devout wearing itself is a continual silent prayer.

"If, however, some extraordinary favor, through the use of the medal, is sought, one may make a novena or triduum, making each day the way of the cross, or reciting five Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honor of the five wounds of our Lord and saying some prayers in honor of St. Benedict. In time of temptation, it is advisable to hold the medal in one's hand, kiss it reverently and make use of the ejaculatory prayers on the medal."

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit my new website at www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco for more details. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.